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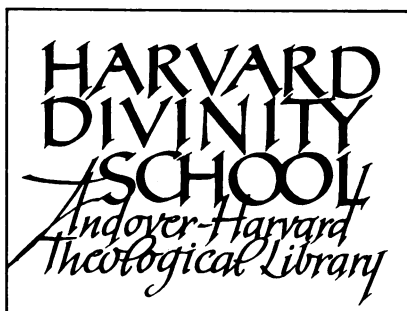
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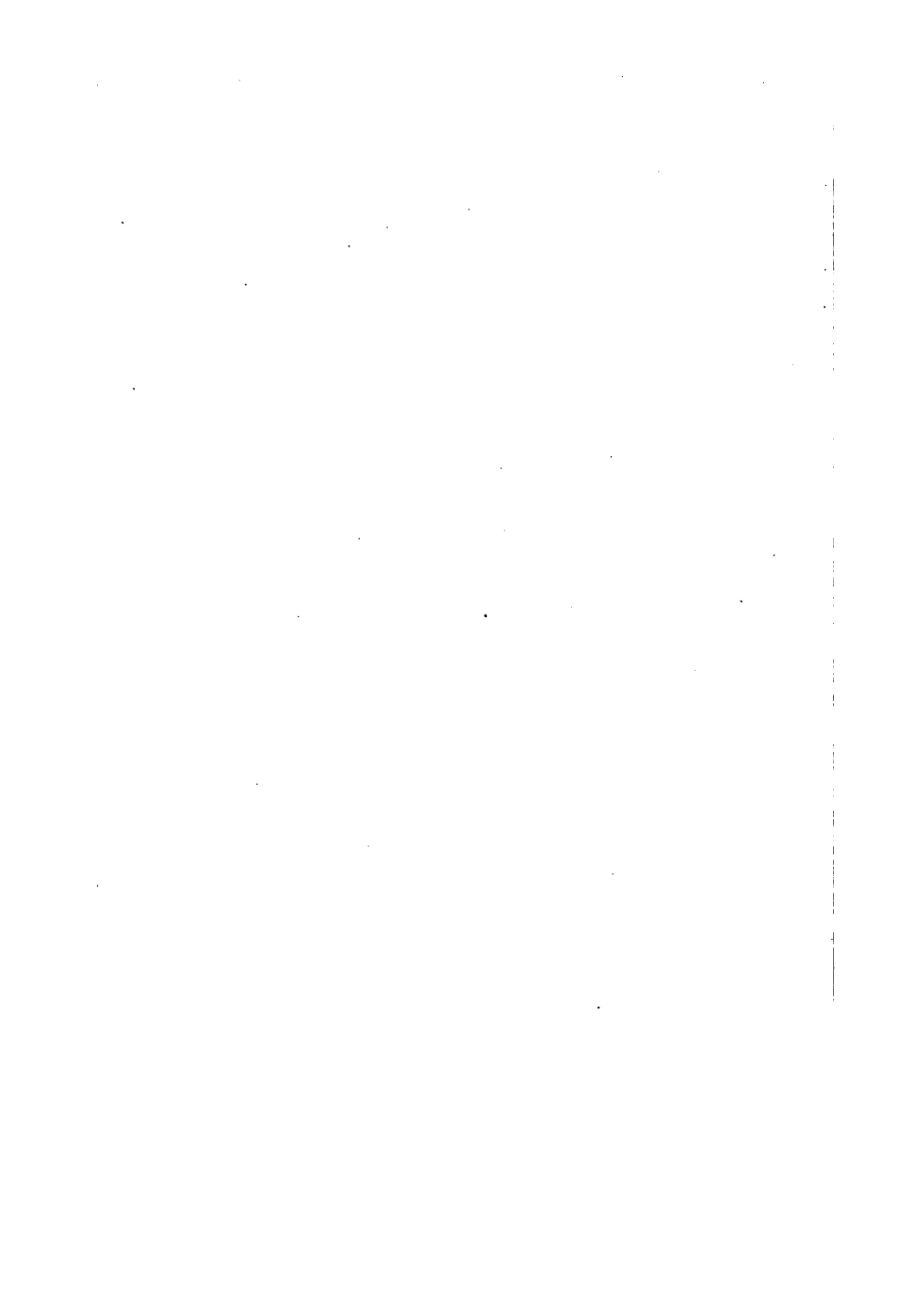
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THE OPEN MYSTERY

A READING OF THE MOSAIC STORY

BY

A. D. T. WHITNEY

"All these things are done in parables."

"I will open my mouth in parables :
I will utter things kept secret from the
foundation of the world."



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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TO
MY GRANDSONS
FOR AND WITH WHOM THESE STUDIES WERE BEGUN
THEY ARE NOW AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

1

2

PRELIMINARY

IN this old Story — at the heart of it — is something that is true ; something that has been believed and lived. Something there is here that is beyond all question of mere outward form, or order, or authorships ; something that has been given into the souls of men who have been thus received into the “fellowship of the mystery” which was from the beginning, and yet was not a hiding against all finding, but only a safe-covering for a sure, continual bringing forth. The secret of the Holy Scripture is a perpetual making manifest.

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A. D. T. W.

MILTON, January 6, 1897

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THE OPEN MYSTERY

PART I

THE NATURAL BEGINNINGS

THOUGHTS come before things.

There is no thing, anywhere, that was not a thought before it was a thing.

The world was made out of God's thoughts.

God's thoughts are in heaven ; the things He makes to show them by are on the earth.

“ In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.”

If a man builds a house, he first builds it of thoughts. He thinks a house. He “ makes up his mind ” just what kind of a house he will have. That is what he calls his plan. He sees it all with his inside sight, before a stick is cut or a brick laid. Then he puts the sticks and the bricks together, and sets his plan in a shape. The shape tells what the

plan has been, — the man's thought and purpose of a house.

Then the use he puts it to is another telling of a thought. He thinks what kind of a life he wants to live, before he builds the house to live it in. So the house, and the house-keeping, are just a telling out of a plan in himself, of something that he is, and of what he wants to be. For to *be*, is just to act out what a thought of *be-ing* is.

We may start, then, with this truth: that every *thing* is a showing of a thought. The thoughts are in heaven, — the inside world; the things are in the earth, — the outside world. One is the region of the real, the other of the manifest. That there have been, that there will be, both, — “from everlasting to everlasting,” — is the only possibility we can conceive. “World without end” must be a continual creation, — the appearing of the invisible by the visible, forever; “the eternal power and Godhead clearly seen and understood by the things that are made.”

Can one imagine *no-thing*? No light, — no air, — no sound; no *place*, even, that has no thing in it; for a place would be some-

thing, — a space between things. We can *not* think of absolute emptiness and non-existence. We cannot think *away* everything; we can only push things apart from each other, leaving room for what may have been, or might be, between them. We cannot look into vacancy, except from something next to vacancy, upon which we stand. Vacancy is only a place for something. We think away out to the edge of nothing, and lo! we come against its edge. We try to imagine a hole with nothing in it, and we find there must be something around it, for it to be a hole.

We read of a place where a world — or an earth — might be, but was not yet. It was a deep, shapeless darkness. It was an ocean of the unformed. Yet a thought brooded upon it. “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” God meant an earth there, and He was thinking it into being.

When we think or plan, we have to take things already made to carry out our plan with. Earth, and stone, and wood, and water are the things we never could have thought or planned. We can *create* nothing. We can only use what is created. God’s thoughts are

4 *THE NATURAL BEGINNINGS*

the essences of things ; they turn directly into things " by the word of his power."

And what was the very first thing ?

What does Moses — searching back in the spirit to very first perceptions — see and declare as the first creation, so far back as the mind of man can ever trace ?

Light — unless the Darkness had been something.

God thought Light, and Light came. All through the empty Darkness, it shone and spread, and filled the great Nothing, and made Something of it.

Perhaps, if we only knew, the making of things is but the separating out of the great Thought, — which is dark to us because it is *all*, and we cannot comprehend all, — the parts or particles which may be comprehended by minds that are but parts themselves, and must take the truth in little portions. It is the only way a visible world, of parts related to each other, and acting upon each other, could be made out of an invisible Whole. God, undivided, is a Dark Presence. He divides himself, that He may make himself visible.

Light was the first dividing of the Life. It was the first showing of God in the making of things.

Light was separated from Darkness, and shone forth in it, everywhere, in unit particles, or atoms.

And then began to work, in this first creation or separating, the great, wonderful law by which all that is separated and made distinct urges and drifts together again, to become the one that it was before, and still is, however divided and individualized.

The particles in this vast living Sea of Light drew together. There was motion among them ; impulse ; the motion and impulse of Life itself. Whirling and winding, they gathered, here and there, in the immense spaces, into globe-forms ; and so there were suns in the heavens. So our sun began, and took a place.

And then, as soon as each sun or globe was so far a One again, it reverted to the first law by which a One must be always dividing and giving itself to be a Many ; as God began the universe from himself. Each sun sent off its particles by that great giving impulse which is the beating of the heart of life ; and again

these particles were whirled and driven, seeking each other, away out in the far distances to which they had again been thrown. Finding each other, and gathering in little, new globes, they became earths, or planets, each belonging to the sun that had sent it forth, and immediately wheeling round and round it, with the impulse to return to it again.

It was a long time after these distinct globes of light were formed before there was anything else at all. But the life of all things was in the light, and the light was burning, as as well as shining, with it. All warmth is life, and the light was so full of life that it was hot, to an intensity that cannot be conceived. All possible things were in it in what we call a state of incandescence ; in a glowing molten fusion.

We know very well in ourselves what it is to glow with a thought. To have some plan or purpose which so stirs the mind as to make it all a-kinde, and to send a sense of physical warmth through the very body. So it was with God's thought in the intensity of his creation. All things that were to be, and that were as yet unformed, seethed and boiled in the first created substance. Waters, earths,

rocks, metals, plants, animals, — were all, in their elements, as one great surging mass of fervid fire.

When a substance is intensely hot, we know that dividing it — breaking or stirring it — helps to cool it down. And exactly so it is with thoughts. Bringing them into separate detail, placing and appointing them, calms them from the fervency in which they began to be. Use — turning thoughts into things and actions — changes fervency into fact; makes it something definite and practical, which is — usable, through having relation to other things. Whatever power or possibility is in a thought, is power to become a substantial manifestation.

By this very process, the thoughts hidden in the fire of the creation, and from which it was enkindled, became forms of life and use. God put them into act.

He separated and separated them again, from each other, distinguishing them into individual quality and character and substance; and yet with such relation to each other, in nature and action and fitness, that they continually turned again, in their differ-

ent uses, toward the oneness of all in which they were at first.

We call the mingled substance of the beginning, which was as fire, *gaseous* ; the particles of its great ocean, apart and moving, had no adherence of solidity ; they were free. No two particles ran together so as to make one. They interpenetrated each other, we say ; rather, they were intercurrent.

Yet were they so secretly charged and constituted that they had hidden sympathies of kind ; by which they found each other out, and drew together. Not one atom could go astray ; it was sure to come to its own. In the earliest creation, as forever among his souls, God was, and is, the *Lord of Hosts*. No many is too many for his certain rule and guidance. Each particle — of matter or of spirit — has its aim and place, and fails of neither.

This elemental joining was the development of substances, the arraying of force, the manifolding of condition and relation. It was the working out from the one Great Thought the details of its mighty and beautiful Work.

Oxygen and Nitrogen, as we call them, —

particles of matter vivified each by its own portion of the divine power,—found each other; drew apart together, and a breath of life existed; an atmosphere in which life might feed was poured around the earth. God said, “Let there be a Firmament;” and this clear, invisible flood gathered itself between the forming globe and the far-surrounding deep of unformed substance, “dividing the waters from the waters.” That was the second point of Creation. Below, were the yet more intimately converging vapors that were condensing into seas; above, were the thin, intangible ethers of a boundless space.

The firmament enveloped the earth; through it the Earth shone, still a star, hot and luminous; the waters upon it were hot oceans. As their particles cooled, and ran yet more closely together, developing density and weight, the crystal rocks appeared, the adhesion of other, different atoms which were all the while making their new combinations from the water-gases, and clinging together with a force so strong as to become what we call solid. Their attraction drew them closer and closer, until it seemed to bring them to a full stop, and fasten them to a shape and place. They were

no longer fluid, or flowing, but fixed. Around them, and down into all the huge hollows between, rolled and settled the waters. There were now mountains and seas. The Creation — the wonderful separating and orderly joining again of shining atoms — had got so far : to fluid and solid. But the fluid, for a long time, was hot water, and the solid was hot, slowly cooling and hardening rock. This was the Third Day ; the third period of the vast, long process. In it, the hot rocks, worn by the hot water, — that is, their particles disturbed in their close clinging, and loosened by the rush and surge and pressure of the ocean, whose own elements fed also upon the elements of the rocks, seizing and bearing away what they in turn had special *appetite* or *seeking* for, — began to give up something of their hard hold, and to be separated and carried off, as soft soil, by the tides and currents, and lodged in any crannies or against any ridges where they might rest ; and this softened soil was the earth in which might be new motions of atoms of life. These were *vegetations* ; an action of yet deeper powers of life ; a choosing of particles in *organic* relation ; not a mere clinging of substance, but a using upon each

other a wonderful influence and help by which together they could build up living forms and begin living uses. Receiving and giving began. God's Thought had so prevailed by the urging of his great Will that it had made of itself tabernacles, receptacles for the higher, larger inflowing of that Will, to the perfect unfolding of its revelations. Out of Life was to come life; thought, at last, was to derive from Thought, and return to it in conscious, loving joy and obedience.

The first of life was in atoms, again; in minute cell-forms; mere simple spheres of substance which had in them some blind unconscious hunger.

There was a desire shut up in matter, which reached continually for the Spirit that had framed matter to be filled with Itself. And the Spirit poured in, and life began.

There was action, reaching; cell put forth cell, and made more room for holding Life. At first there were only what seemed conglomerations; then one part began to minister to another of the life; to take relation; to divide into functions. And all this "worked that self-same Spirit, dividing to each severally as it would."

Vegetable cells built up into stems, searched downward into roots; drank thirstily of the life that was in air and earth and moisture; knowing in themselves nothing but to be hungry and thirsty and to eat and drink; not feeling or foreseeing what was feeding in them toward a higher power, a more perfect glory. But God's intent and meaning were in them and behind them, working surely to his final purpose all the while.

Grass blades grew out of the first simple soil; tall, rank, and strong, with the first intense potencies, we suppose they were. Grasses branched into herbage; stems reared further and further into the waiting air and sunlight, taking their inspiration from above, and put forth leaves and fronds. The leaf was prophecy and parable. It had in itself the elements of all future structures; the skeleton-fibre, — the sap-filled veins, — the tender tissue which the sap-secretions formed into body and outline.

The Day of the grass and herb was upon the earth. It was "evolution;" but God was the Evolver, and the evolved was his manifestation.

Forever descending upon and into the

creation were light and breath; forever ascending were the asking and the reaching and the absorbing. It was the ladder of the living, between heaven and earth, up and down which traveled the angels, — the ministers. “He maketh his angels spirits (breathings); his ministers a flame (a shining and a warmth) of fire.”

Read all that hundred and fourth Psalm with this thought of the creating God in it; the working and giving of his life and power. Did not David have the same faith in the making of things that Moses had? And has Science, at the point even to which it has crept in this day, any contradiction to this great Belief which goes behind Science, and grasps on to future Fact which Science alone will never reach?

Is not the song that “the morning stars sang together” the same that sang in the hearts of Moses and of David, — yes, more, is it not in the full Revelation, — the “*Song of Moses and of the Lamb*”? Is it not the Alpha and Omega of the Word of Creation?

It was the Fourth Period, according to the belief of Moses, in which the great order of

the heavens was unrolled, and became apparent from the point of earth. No man was yet there to see; but man afterward looked back by thought and reason, or by the intuitions through which God led thought and reason to knowledge, and placed himself in wondering imagination upon his home-globe in its genesis halfway completed, and saw thence the vast opening panorama that must have been revealed. The great Light that was first made, — that was everywhere, — that had still wrapped about the earth itself beyond its own little air-ocean, as with a garment slipping slowly away and disappearing, as the planet cooled, by the scattering of its atoms to invisibility, — had been as a “darkness from excess of light,” to hide, as daylight hides the stars, the bodies shining in far space, and moving, to primitive understanding, in their majestic rhythm of Night and Day and the great Seasons of the Year.

Moses only knew the heavenly motions as accounted for by men of his time; but his *perception* was something far more interior and essential, and so more real and true, than his knowledge or his eyesight. He knew, *within* his mind, straight from God’s Mind,

something of how it must have been. He took his start from the great Certainty in him, — God alone *is*: from God began the world: and he traveled *with* God down the awful divisions of his Will into Act, the successions of his power in grand, inclusive stages, instead of *back*, with a half-blind human exploration from far, subdivided effects into central causes. He *believed* what reached him this wise, of the truths of the Beginning; it was *faith* in him, — immediate conception; — that faith which, thousands of years afterward, Saint Paul told the people of the Christian Church is never of ourselves, or our finding out: “it is the gift of God.”

So, by this wonderful gift, which always precedes discovery, it came to Moses to interpret and explain an order of things which all the world’s study ever since only verifies as a magnificent outline of a history concerning which Science may go on laboring forever in finding out particulars, but can never, with any however wise details, gainsay or contradict.

The blinding Light, then, gathered itself away, as when some great work is finished the

material out of which it has been put in form is cleared from the beautiful fabric; and Creation stood manifest, as we see it now; it was another "Let there be!" from the voice of God. "Let there be *lights!*" Separate, orderly, each in its own place and circle, instead of the rushing, universal, unformed Light. "Lights in the firmament of heaven," the upper, far-off space; "to rule the day and the night, and the seasons and the years, and to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the Fourth Day." Always an evening and a morning; a time of dimness and waiting and half accomplishment, and a time of achievement, and gladness, and a new step forward in the story of things.

The earth was ready, with light and water, air and food; all was cooled down to a soft, though fervid, temperature, in which animals might live, and breathe, and eat; and then came the command, Let there be living creatures in the water and in the air. Notice the explicit form of it, which anticipates all that we are finding out from the other end —

creeping back to the Inspiration of God by the path that explores to Him through the curious, invisible ways of matter, that are but the obediences of creation to his will : notice how Moses believes that God said, "Let the *waters* bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life."

Moses did not *know* what germ-cells were, we suppose : we need not be too sure even of that ; but we are certain that he did know what the germ-cells are teaching us, — that fluid matter is the very motion of creatures that have life ; that it is instinct with God's own life and purpose in the material ; and that from his first thought and command, *all* was in his world that ever should be : that his world was simply of and from Himself.

And God blessed them — with the very force and gift of his own life ; saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters, and the seas, and the earth."

And the evening and the morning were the Fifth Day.

And God said, "Let the *earth* bring forth !" The waters and the air had their fishes and

their fowl ; let the earth find out its hidden elements of being ; let the creeping thing and the beast be alive and glad in their way and their place that God had given them. And it was so. And God saw that it was good.

Now we are in the long Sixth Day. There was no pause after this. When the *beast* had been made, the work was very near the best, the human ; and it went swiftly on.

“God created man in his own image ;” He had brought the receptacle up to the highest receiving possibility : He “breathed into him” his own breath, and “man became a living soul.” The life of the spirit was added to the life of matter ; a son of God’s own likeness stood forth, to possess and understand and use his works. “Let him have dominion,” were God’s words, proclaiming his child’s inheritance. “Let him rule over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

“*Over.*” it was outside rule and use ; *within*, God kept his own place of power and work. He gives the inward being, always ; with the beast, and with man, it is so forever.

He waits till man desires and asks, and *consents in obedience*, to give him the highest, the inmost of all ; the spiritual birth into a sure, eternal, as yet unmanifested, life ; this is "the power of the Resurrection."

"Of the dust of the ground," — of matter, and in relation to matter, — is the first man ; "of the earth, earthy ;" God breathes into him a human power of life, and he becomes a soul ; He will yet breathe into him the Holy Ghost from heaven, and make of him a quickening spirit.

PART II

THE MORAL BEGINNINGS

CHAPTER I

THE GARDEN

MOSES begins the garden-story in his second chapter of the Book of Genesis, or the Record of the Beginnings. In it he recapitulates the "generations," or the births of things, with a summing up of the facts ; a repetition of the one great statement that this origination, and all its majestically unfolding succession, was of the Lord God, who "made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field *before it was in the earth*, and every herb of the field *before it grew* ;" they being in his Thought before the things were, and the possibility of them being hidden in the living force of creation, from the very first word until the definite completion. And Moses repeats, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground : " man, also, — the highest created

thing, was of and through the lowest; the intent of him and the process of his making, being in all, from the very first particle-birth of matter, and the preparation of all being for the environment of his life and training in the earth.

It is here, in his personal relation toward man, that the God of Creation is called The *Lord* God; the Bestower, the Provider, the Ruler of human life. It was the *Lord* God who "planted a garden eastward in Eden;" a home-place and centre for his child; and who walked there with Adam in the cool of the day; in the morning freshness of his being, and of all things.

A *garden* is a safe place where living growths may be cherished. God put man into a garden; and he planted the garden *eastward* in *Eden*, which is *toward the sun-rising*, in *delight*.

Did Moses mean some little patch of ground only, literally bounded by the four branches of the great River of Western Asia? Or did "Eden" stand for the whole beautiful, unspoiled, orderly earth, and "eastward" mean its whole steady unerring turning toward the Source of Life and Light?

“Eastward,” all through the Hebrew Scripture, denotes, inmost, *toward God*. For joy and worship men turned eastward. “The glory of God came by the way of the east.” The Levites, in the Temple, singing and praising the Lord, “stood at the east end of the altar.” Even when threat and disaster are foretold, as judgment or discipline from God, it is from the east—out of his Power and Presence—that they are said to be sent. It was an east wind that brought the locusts which devoured the land of Egypt; it was an east wind that drove back the sea for the safe crossing of the Israelites. “Because my people hath forgotten me,” saith the Lord in the prophecy of Jeremiah, “I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.”

So, whatever the “Garden of Eden” was in reality,—whether just one literal spot of earth beautiful and safe between great rivers, and lying beneath a glorious warm-brooding sky; or a type-image of the first, essential life of man, abiding in the love and peace of the Almighty Presence, and the life of his Righteousness,—it was *eastward*,—toward the heaven whence came the sun-shining, the power, and the glory. It means that there

was a time of simplicity and direct knowledge, when man lived with God, and knew Him as his Friend.

Out of this garden, this early life, Moses believed and said that man was driven by sin; by disobedience to the holy; by a turning back from God into himself. By seeking *to himself* the knowledge, from earth-grown sources, that he should have waited upon God for, and taken just in the way and time that God should give it. By hastening to make bread for himself out of the stones of the material, instead of living by the immediate daily bread of the Word of God.

“Dress and keep the garden that I have made; eat the fruit of the trees of it; take all the good that grows out of it for your own living: but of one hidden, central thing, seek not of your own power to seize; be not impatient to realize and decide and command for yourselves the Why, and the Why Not, — the evil and the good. Leave the knowledge, the understanding, the ordaining, the revelation, to Me. The inmost meaning, the eternal outcome, of your life are Mine. Day by day you shall live by me, as I will give you life continually. You cannot live of your-

selves ; the purpose and the gift are mine : if you think to take these presumptuously into your own will and doing, — if you turn from my instant leading and commandment, you shall not live ; you shall surely die.”

The First Great Commandment was set forth then. “I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt love me — lean to me — receive me — in all things: in your heart and mind, and soul and strength ; your desires, your thoughts and knowledges, your power and act. My Strength, my Truth, my Love are the Source and Feeding of them all. It is the Sacrament of Being. I am your Daily Bread. Ye shall live by my word alone.” This was the secret of the Law of the Garden, which Moses put on record in a history under a figure, long before he graved it at the head of the First Table of Stone, for the leading of the Children of Israel back out of the slavery of Egypt into the freedom and blessing of the Promised Land.

Moses believed, and tells in the story, that man was not a complete being except as male and female ; that it was in the image of God’s own Nature he was so created as a double

one. Man stands for the Thought, that forms in specific understanding, and eventuates in act ; woman for the Desire, the Impulse, the Motive, that is at the hidden heart of Life, and urges it to its realization and detail. Knowledges, and the Love that reaches out and proves itself in knowledges — what else complete and unify desire and experience? And what else but desire and experience comprise and express the whole of human life?

Dominion was given to man in the outset ; before his dual nature was declared to him. Motive was supplied as the feminine to the masculine ; the inner, spiritual hope and affection were inalienably joined to all outward reach and achievement ; together they made the doing of the Will on earth and in heaven. And lest mind and heart should ever lose relation to each other, each was separately personified in a duplex human existence, a mutual and dear personal representation. Adam and Eve, the man and the woman, lived together in the Garden of Eden : “ out of the ground ” the beasts of the earth and the bodily Adam were formed ; out of the essential Man himself was taken the principle

which became existent to himself as counterpart and complement; the only possible revealing to him of the double nature and image in which he had been created; in which only, because it is the nature and image of the Divine, he was to be able to love, and know, and live from the Lord his God.

And then the parable goes on. For fact or fable, all things are parables. And next we learn the story of the woman and the serpent.

Into human desire, — represented by the woman, as the affectional nature of man, — came a false understanding, an earthly subtilty, represented by the cunning, creeping thing of the ground; the creature that was only wise with a little keener wisdom in the same way as the other “beasts of the field.” Only a beast of the field, — a life and understanding of the lowest things, after all, though it dared to touch and promise of the highest. And this lower understanding, getting hold of man’s desire, put this question into that side of his nature: “You are not to know all things? You are not to eat of all the trees? And yet the trees are there, and the fruit of

them. Why are they in the garden? Yes, in the very heart of it? Why should you not be wise even to the heart of things?"

Perhaps we had better stop a moment right here to remind ourselves afresh that we are *studying what Moses believed*; what he got hold of, behind what he saw, that made what he saw plain to him; and to understand his way of putting it, we must grasp with him this vital centre, this real thing he was sure of, — and then see if we can comprehend how he would be likely to present his faith in words, and what were the circumstances that had shaped his methods of thinking and expression.

Reading back through man's experience in the world, this was the inner fact that Moses had found out, — speaking, as we do, of what God teaches through thought-processes in the human mind: that there was, and is, a *first law*, — a law in the heart, in the sense that is above thought, as spirit is above brain. If first law had been obeyed, the ten commandments would not have needed, as ten distinct precepts, to be graven on stones. The first man — or the earliest men — whether Adam alone in Eden, or a beginning of the race in

the earth just large enough to come into mutual relations — knew, by intuition, by an inward implanted word, a law of right and wrong. The *may do*, and the *may not do*, were perceived by a sense of things created in them ; “the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” It said to them, — and it was the word of the Lord, “nigh, and in the heart,” — “Of all the fruit of the garden,” — of all the things that I have made and given you, — “take and use ; eat of all the trees that are *good for food* ;” enjoy, assimilate, grow by them ; they are for your life ; “in all these things is the visitation of my Spirit.” Know the good, by possession, by appropriation, by putting it into deed. But so you shall not know evil. *Of* evil, — that it may be, and that it is the opposite and antagonism of good, — you may, you do know : by experience, by putting it into deeds, you shall not know. “Ye shall not *eat* of the tree of knowledge of good *and evil*.”

All this story of Adam and Eve and the serpent is a setting forth of this truth that Moses believed lay at the beginning of moral history. The *commandment* was in the inner

consciousness. Positive good was all about man, created for him, in his reach; evil the negative, was a something involved, as light involves shadow. Wrong lay over against the right, as a possibility. But it was not to be experimented; not to be put in form, tried, tested by man's act, to see whether he could eat of it and not die.

Man was not to walk in the shadow, but in the light.

How was Moses to tell this to the Children of Israel, to whom he desired to give the truth? How had he himself been taught all inner knowledges? He was "learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians." He had been brought up and taught among the signs and mysteries of the priests. He was trained in symbolisms; he knew all the stories of their gods; the fables in which were told eternal facts, but in which the fact and fable were carefully kept separate,—the fable for the ignorant people, the fact for the priests only. So what wonder, if when he had a great single truth to tell,—something that had cleared itself to him out of all the mixture of false and earthly imaginations, and had showed him plainly the One Power and Life of things,

and the Law of its Righteousness, — he should tell it to them in a simple story suited to their interest and comprehension, or, if the story were already made, that he should indorse it? It is the way the truth is told all through the Bible, — by the signs in things, and in the outside life of men. Reasons are folded in appearances; the naked, abstract, spiritual truth is clothed in history, in example. Every Hebrew child could understand and remember the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent and the forbidden fruit; as childhood grew into maturity, in the individual and in the race, the inner meaning and knowledge of the story would dawn and expand to them; not to contradict and confuse, but to illuminate. But for a long time — having, through trying to be as gods, knowing the good and the evil, lost out of their hearts God's first inspiration of knowledge — men had to live in types. They had to learn, partially and darkly, by an outside form. It would only be when the form of things and the soul of things should be made one to them again by a pure obedience, that they should have once more the sure, direct perception, the Visitation of the Spirit.

Meanwhile, it was given to one here and there to "know the mysteries," and to tell them again, in symbolic legend that should stay by in outer memory, until the inner apprehension should awaken; "*lest*," — *in case that*, as the Lord of Truth puts it concerning his own speech in parable, — "they should at any time repent, and be converted, and I should make them whole."

In those early days, and under their habits of speech, the people at least knew this; that they *were* taught in parables, and that something mightier than they were yet able to receive was for the time hidden from their eyes.

It could scarcely have occurred to the grandly simple mind of Moses, wise in the infinite deep meanings and intent upon their utterance, that in a remotely future time, after reiterated prophecy and gospel, there should come into brief succession upon the earth a generation of men so learned and shrewd in naturalisms as to let go his divine insights in gravely arguing the circumstantial credibility of his similitudes!

He believed that the Law of Good and Evil was the Law of Life and Death. That life only lives by good, and that evil in itself is

death, and has to die. By learning evil, man came to the necessity of death, that a new life of good might be begun. Good is the only everlasting; bad must pass away. Through long time, through long pain; because evil has joined itself to life, and clings to it as disease clings to the body. But the end is the death of the evil. Disease is perishing, — it is the process of it. The outward body may go with the disease, but the life escapes: if there is yet good with the life it will begin again. To be given over to evil altogether is the everlasting Death.

Moses saw and believed yet further concerning this innate Law of Righteousness which was the Commandment of the Garden; and he goes on to tell it in the story.

So Moses wrote, "The man knows good and evil; he has partaken of them both: he may not put forth his hand, as he is now, to the tree of life, and eat, and live so forever. The evil must first be done away. Therefore the Lord God drove man forth" out of the safe, sweet garden where he could only have stayed in his early innocence, and sent him into the wilderness, to struggle, to suffer, to

conquer. And the shining, terrible Law, of Life for Good and Death for Evil, stood before the gate of the garden, and "kept the way" by which there was now no returning. Man had chosen the other way, and he must go on through its toils, its dangers, its sorrows, its needs, to learn the good of Good and the evil of Evil, and to come to the eternal life by the suffering of earthly death.

That was the way Moses explained the great problem of things which concerns every human soul. Each soul is its own Adam, and makes its own choice. But evil choices have made it harder and harder in the world. We are not in a garden, but in a wilderness.

It was long, long after Moses that the great word came through One who lived the truth and died for it: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And through the vision of Him by his apostle, — "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in

the stone a *new* name written. I will write upon him *My new Name*." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Behold, I make all things new." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

The first chapters of Genesis and the last chapters of the Revelation should be read the one with the other. The Garden of Eden, where God walked with man in his first innocence: the new heavens and the new earth wherein is to dwell righteousness, — where is the Holy City, New Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God with men; these are the beginning and the end, the purpose and accomplishment, the type and the fulfillment. Between lies the whole moral history — the whole spiritual evolution — of mankind.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST CRIME

MOSES tells — or indorses — here a very simple story ; a mere matter of tradition, it would seem, as handed down among the early people of the earth, regarding the first births and lives of men, and the first differentiations of humanity from original type ; the first workings, in consequence, of character and motive, resulting in open act. Going behind the letter of the narrative, which is our study in these testimonies, we have found the great faith in a Divine Personality and Power, of which things made are the evidence, to be the inner understanding of creation ; and that the order of creation follows inevitably the order of a Divine Life.

Now we come to the story of human life in its divine relation and its natural environment, and of how the perfect unity and co-working of these was disturbed by sin, until the divine and the natural were even set in a horrible

antagonism. Moses is as brief in his outlines as he was before. He explains not; he does not discuss; he sets forth plain fact, behind which lies cause, the be-cause of his telling. His very brevity shows the urgency of inner purpose. It is the eternal Why of things — it is the spiritual law of life — that is searched out and put on record. Moses is not a mere reciter of old legends.

The key to the whole account — the reason why of the happening and history — lies in the seventh verse of this fourth chapter of the Beginnings. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." That which "lies at a man's door," is the charge to him of his doings; the point and showing of his personal responsibility.

Sin lay at the door of Cain, in that he had made an untrue, insufficient offering, — one that, in its nature and motive, could not be accepted. Acceptance was not arbitrary, of favoritism. It was of integral worthiness — worth-ship. Sin lay farther back than Cain himself; in the first departure from a holy loyalty, by which the son of Adam and Eve came into an inheritance of evil tendency, a

strain of something in himself against which the better of him would have to struggle. *Sin* is *departure*, aberration from right and love. *Crime* is violent act against them. When sin had got into the world, crime followed: upon loss came woes.

Cain and Abel were very likely twin brothers; this probability has been deduced from the concise statement concerning their birth. They represented the twofold nature of man. *Cain* means *acquisition*, — the taking to one's self. Eve said, "*I have gotten a man from the Lord.*" There was self claiming first place. The child was hers; she had gotten him. In the child was born, and in him ruled, this principle of getting, — of assuming and appropriating. *Abel* means a *breath*, hence, superficially interpreted a *transitoriness*; as if it were a prophecy of his short life upon the earth. Why not, rather, an *inspiration*? Why not the quickening of the Spirit, the birth to something higher than the mortal inheritance of self and sin? The rest of the story is plain indication that such significance was there.

Abel was a keeper of sheep. His work was chosen among living creatures. He served —

with love, feeding, cherishing — the *life*. Not the mere material; — the “fruit of the ground.” He was drawn to gentle, living sympathies; to the work of shepherding, which was type of the Lord’s own care of living souls. In this, he was on a higher plane of use and affection than his brother Cain. And it was of life — life that he loved, — life that was as his own — that he offered his sacrifice. This, though still only in the type, means all. It is the giving of life, — of heart’s desire, — to the divine will and purpose, that God wants, not the formal, outside offering of things. For all *things* are already his: it is life only that He has so shared with his children that they may turn and offer it again to Him. Cain brought of his acquisitions. Abel brought of his living affections. The one of what he had got; as if he could give to God. The other of what he was; as already belonging to God. And each knew his answer of the Lord. How, the text does not explain. That belongs in the hidden sense. Moses only says, “The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.” And Cain was wroth. What with?

Not himself; not the lower of the double human nature. With the higher nature of his brother, by which his lower was condemned. He sided with his own wrong; that way lies wrath and punishment. Not with God and the truth against his own evil; that way would have been forgiveness and restoration. Repentance sets God on man's side; it annuls wrath, for wrath is only contradiction.

Now comes God's demand. "Why art thou wroth? Why art thou contrary to Me? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, thy sin lieth in the way."

And the terrible sentence follows, — the law of life and death, — the condition of condemnation or of victory, — which sounds so enigmatical to first careless hearing, but is so deep in awful, righteous certainty. "And unto *thee*," — unto this lower nature of thine, if thou by sin wilt have it so, — "shall be his desire," — the desire of the higher; "and the *lower shall rule*."

The lower, — the brutal — did rule. "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

What did Moses — what must we — believe

by this, but that the earthly *may* slay the heavenly?

"And now" — came the voice of God again — "thou art cursed." Your life has *crossed* — *thwarted*, — all my meaning for you. "The very ground" — even the earthly for the sake of which thou hast sinned — "shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. Thou shalt be a fugitive and a vagabond," — a restless, unsatisfied, baffled wanderer and striver — "in the earth." It was saying to him, "Go; the earth is open before you; struggle, acquire what you can; but the very earth is not *with* you, for it is the outcome of, and works according to, the heavenly; and upon the heavenly you have turned your back."

Nevertheless, even Cain should not, as he feared, be *slain*; he should not be destroyed; life should remain to him, and so, surely some final hope. But now, "he went out from the presence of the Lord."

CHAPTER III

THE DELUGE

THE story of the Deluge is the story of a Great Cleansing. A taking away of men, that Man upon the earth might make a new beginning.

Cain went out into the land of Nod.

Nod means *wandering*. Cain was a vagabond ; the first great vagrant, without home or place upon the earth. He was a man without bond, or ties ; he had destroyed his family relationship and claim ; he was without human anchorage ; drifting, driven to and fro. Yet he was a man, and alive ; and his life, broken and spoiled as it was, went on. He made to himself new ties. No : man makes nothing ; he accepts. God still gave to Cain, — into all that was left on the God-side of his nature. He gave him wife and children ; and his children's children increased in the land of his wandering.

They began to learn the arts of life. They built cities ; Cain himself built the first one, and called it after the name of his firstborn son, Enoch. Family and established home began to be, and to be dear and honored, upon the earth. There was all this to save, and to grow from, even for the man who had cursed himself against earth by the first crime, and for his descendants.

Men grew wise and cunning in many works and inventions. They found out about music, — the management of sweet, grand sounds ; and they made instruments of sound — harps, and organs, — and learned the handling of them. Jubal, the sixth in line from Cain, and seventh from Adam, “ was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ.”

Notice this one little instance of the relation of letter and meaning in Scripture record ; a quite plain example of how the first only indicates — not defines — the second. Jubal was not the progenitor, in the flesh, of all who have since lived as skilled lovers of music. He was the beginner of musical art ; the father of music, as Galen and Hippocrates were fathers of medicine ; as the seers of the first Christian centuries were the fathers of the Church.

We have no trouble in understanding the fact. It is only in divorcing letter and meaning that trouble and doubt come. Words, terms of speech, are but signs put forth. The real thing is behind the sign. Once accept this, and look for an interpretation in all, and tangles become clues, and darkness turns luminous. The every-day speech of to-day, used so carelessly and with such superficial intent, is like the rocks and fossils, rich with revelation, — full-stored with histories of old human experience. We never get the reality of anything without analysis. Why should we expect the profoundest truth to lie bare and evident upon the surface, in narrative and utterance through which men of old time signified their deepest, uttermost knowledges? Interpretation is disclosure; an opening forth. Of language, it is the rendering of something shut up in language, hindered by its limits. Except for symbolism, which brings like to like, reminding us of something we know by which we may begin to apprehend the inexpressible, word and speech would not be human. They would be as mere animal sounds, the cries of the beasts, uttering no thought, but only present, momentary feeling. We

are to remember this ; to start with it as a premise, and carry it on into all conclusions in the study of what has been grandly and truly called "Holy Writ." For "holy" is "wholly ;" holiness is entireness, wholeness ; complete in both inward and outward, spiritual and natural, which are a whole, and not separate.

Tubal-Cain, the brother of Jubal, was the "instructor of every artificer in brass and iron ;" of all useful and ornamental work in the metals ; tool-making, cunning and elaborate decorations ; devices to reinforce human power in the subduing of all things to the service of human life, — fine and exquisite architectures and adornments, also. Away back before the Flood, before any connected and complete history, these skills and sciences began. To what they may have grown before the great destruction came, we have no record but that of scant tradition. Men lived long lives, and wrought and builded. The length of life itself argues much of complete achievement. A man could shape and pursue his idea deliberately to perfection. He was not hurried, nor stopped short. A generation could accomplish what centuries have failed

of since, in the slow periods of the middle ages which our histories chronicle. The same generation held centuries in its unloosened grasp ; there was no detaching and imperfect joining again of purpose and progress. We have come to times now, when acceleration takes the place of continuance, and a man's fifty years are fuller and faster than — *perhaps* — Methuselah's nine hundred and sixty-nine.

Yet how shall we compare, and know ? The higher the arts, — the more far-reaching the discoveries, — the frailer and more temporary the mechanical means and appliances, hence the more entirely perishing the indicating traces. The Pyramids stand for countless centuries : the electric threads that join the uttermost parts of the earth in instant intercourse, and inaugurate absolutely new eras of labor, method, power, accomplishment, would — were the thought of man that invents and uses confused and lost — vanish like cobwebs from off wind-blown twigs.

What we do know is that as knowledges and skills increased, self and sin increased their power with them, just as they do to-day. We read of the "sons of God" taking the "daughters of men" to be their wives, and

that of such union giants of might arose and were renowned. What was this but the joining of divine force, given from heaven, to the desires and motives of earth? Even this God allows to come to pass. He does not stop his gift, though men make earthly and evil use of it. His sun keeps on shining and streaming forth vitality, upon the just and upon the unjust. But, *sometime*, in his *own* time, He interposes. He who says to the sea, "Thou shalt come thus far, and no farther," says the same thing to human pride and self-will and presumption. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." The very Spirit, the very Law, by and under which men work to their own ends, becomes the Avenger, — that it may be the Redeemer.

And so we find that there was a time when this came to pass in the far-back, legendary periods; and that this visitation of God, the certainty of it, and the need of it, and the remedy by means of it, were what Moses believed in. Always behind the awfulness, a mercy: an evil to be done away, a good to be established. *That God takes in hand what man is spoiling*, and, utterly destroying the

harm, *gives man a clean chance again*, is the faith underlying all the woes and threats and judgments of the Old Testament. It is the central Testament itself. God's *judgments* are a solemn *adjusting*, — a setting right: his judgments and his justifying are one, as the word is one. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: but the Lord shall endure forever; he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness; he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness." That is what is to come of it all.

In the mean time, something is true that we are hardly able to understand, so wonderful, so divine is it. And this wonderful, divine thing is what we read next, in this history that Moses believed, and it is the very secret of his believing.

God *com-passionates*. He endures, suffers, *with* us. What we bear, He bears. What we bring upon ourselves, we bring upon Him, in the pain of his own wise, sure, terrible judgments. As it is the good — the God — in us that suffers in our remorse, it is the All-Good, — the God himself, — who suffers in

all the wrong of humanity. It is the "Lamb," — the Tenderness and Truth of the Heart of God, — "in the midst of the throne," — the Almighty, — that forever shares with us in a mystery of At-one-ment. "God so loved the world" from the beginning, that He never spared himself in all the world's anguish. "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world."

"He repenteth *him* of the evil." "He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth *him* of the evil."

"Therefore, saith the Lord, turn ye to me with all your hearts." He gives of his own repentance into the hearts of men, that so He may forgive and restore. Repentance, — destruction of evil, — turning back to the good, — there is no other way; there can be no other "scheme of salvation." And it begins in God himself.

When man goes wrong, God is sorry. Wrong *is* sorrow, and the sorrow for it can only be in the good. When "God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually, *it*" — the evil — "repented the Lord that he had made man

upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

This word "repent," here, is not the same that means "to turn back." It means just what the last clause of the sentence explains. It "grieved him at his heart." It was not change of purpose, or discovery of mistake. He knew what would happen when He made man; He did not draw back from his undertaking now, and He never will; his "word never returns unto him void." He goes on with his work through all that He and his children must bear together, to perfect the glory that He means for them with Him: and all the way He is "tenderly sorry" with them.

The destruction must come, — the renovation must be made. "I will destroy the life that I have made upon the earth, — for it repenteth me." It would not have "repented" Him; it would not have made Him tenderly sorry, if He could create, or permit, evil. He would have let man go on: He would have made him comfortable in his wickedness; it would have been but man's living out of something which God had in his own nature and had given to him. And the provision for it

would have been in his power. But God never does make man comfortable in sin. Good was the end of his creation; and until man himself would be sorry, and leave his evil, God himself must bear to be sorry for him. He must bring to an end, for the sake of a new beginning. Earthly life, in itself, was of no consequence. It was only as the training to and unfolding of a heavenly, that it mattered. It was temporary, anyway: and the "times" were "in his hand."

The earth was "filled with violence," through the corruption of all flesh. Therefore, the time had come. I will destroy the flesh, and the evil, said the Lord.

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Transpose the sentence. "The eyes of the Lord found his own grace in Noah." He found good, rather than evil, ruling in him. And not a particle of good can ever be destroyed. Noah, having a divine good in him, was to be saved alive.

"Noah was a just man. . . . And Noah walked with God."

And the name "Noah" means "rest," — "comfort."

Rest in the Lord, and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit also findeth "rest" in the soul that receives it.

Here we have the whole Divine-human relation.

Moses tells us that God "said" something "unto Noah."

The just man, — the man who "loves justice and judgment," who works for them in all his doings, — who so "walks with God" in His own ways, — shall be spoken to in his heart by the Lord.

The Lord walks and talks with his true human child who follows in his leading and listens. More than all the special story of Noah, and the rain and the ark and the great overwhelming of waters on the earth, and the saving upon Ararat, was, in the mind of Moses, this faith. Noah was a grand, representative man. The Flood was a representative circumstance in the history of things. The great outward experience was great only as it revealed the inward. It is very strange that people take the letter of the narrative, the detail of the circumstance, to be the impor-

tant thing,—the thing to be made sure of or to disprove, to doubt or to believe,—and imagine that the whole spiritual authority of the Bible depends on such letter and circumstance, imperfectly handed down and recorded in the memories and chronicles of men. They seem to forget that we have no absolutely perfect record of the details of any historical event. Of the main facts, the causes and results, we are confidently certain ; but in the press of action, in the urgency of momentous experience, much is always confused and even contradictory to eye-witness itself or to immediate recollection. There are disputes about the statistics of the battle of Waterloo ; but no one doubts that there was a battle of Waterloo, and that it was the end of the Napoleonic domination of Europe.

After Moses—after anybody—has come to see that the great matters illustrated in the outside event are true ; that God's work upon the earth and in human lives is the making of good and the destruction of evil ; that the one has in it the law of eternal life, and the other the law of eternal death ; that the Lord will not lose nor waste a particle of

the good, in the race or in the individual soul; that every right-doing puts a man on the side of God and his infinite power; that all "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;" that the thoughts of truth and wisdom in a man's mind are whisperings directly to him out of the Eternal Thought and Knowledge;—what else, in comparison, signifies the question whether an earthly event and experience were remembered and reported with unerring accuracy and complete understanding from remotest age,—from behind and during and after a Deluge which swept away men and the traces of men, except a small remnant of a tribe or family,—or some points were left open to a doubt or a conjecture? Do we get the story of a shipwreck or a railway disaster of last week with such precision from the survivors as seems to be demanded here?

That evil, corrupted life was swept away, in a great region of the earth, and an evil time brought to an end that a fresh and better might begin; that some lives, with the good yet living and possible in them, were spared and separated for this new Genesis; that God's Thought works in human thought, and

that He leads and teaches and provides and prevents; that, above all, his own Heart is filled with the very feeling, in a divine entirety, that man's knows faintly and in part, — so that the pain of a man is but a small sign of something that thrills the Almighty Spirit, and that Almightyness itself is set to heal and turn to peace — these are the inward facts that are set before the mere story, in the very order of the telling. We come to them before we come to a single word about the ark, and the strange pairing of living creatures, by sevens and by twos, and the forty days and forty nights of tempest and flood, and the covering of all the hills fifteen cubits deep, and the perishing of all living substance except that in the ark, where the Lord had put it for safety by the hand of Noah, and himself, with his own hand, had “shut him in.”

Every here and there is a wonderful word of parable in these old statements of God's dealing with men in outside providences. “The Lord shut him in.” He showed Noah just one thing to do, one way and place to take and enter, and He “shut him in.” It is a safe and beautiful thing when the Lord shuts one in, leaving no doubt or wandering, or even

escape, possible. The child knows then that he is under the controlling hand of the Father, and has only to lie still and wait His time; to "humble himself under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt him." "Rest in the Lord," — in the place where He puts you, even when He shuts you in, — the Bible keeps telling us, all through; "and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Not the desires of your mistaken imagination, — not the freedom and ease you might like for the moment, — but the real heart and life desire and need, which these passing wishes erroneously represent; the real desire of his own Heart, which in you is your true instinct toward eternal life.

We lose these beautiful words of the Word when we puzzle and argue, and strive to reconcile, or to justify ourselves in rejecting, the fragmentary and necessarily incomplete annal of events, which is made their vehicle. "The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life." We want to find from the Bible what God's Truth was in the hearts of men, longer ago than we can look for any carefully collated and authenticated particulars of what happened to them day by day, or age by age.

With this clear purpose, we shall find ourselves constantly and intuitively reading between the lines, — we shall find, without dictation, the spiritual correspondence, as the men did who learned it by living it, and who were the Believers of the Bible.

We shall see that whether the whole globe was submerged or not; whether all life everywhere was destroyed, or only a local deluge swept what was known to the few survivors as the “whole earth;” whether the wisdom and foresight of the ark-building was a special, mysterious disclosure to Noah, or given to him through the natural channel of his human perceptions; whether his plan seemingly evolved from his own mental effort and invention, or was “commanded” him by a voice external to his self-consciousness; whether the gathering signs of the atmosphere and season, or the direct warning of God, apprised him that the great water windows of heaven would soon be opened, and the rivers would burst their bounds and rush and spread until the whole countryside should be as a sea, in which everything would perish; whether he gathered of his family and of the living creatures upon which human life

depended, so far as was possible to him, into the great vessel three hundred cubits long and fifty wide, and thirty high, with one window and one door; or whether all the fauna of Asia, as the legend seems to relate, found a way in and room to stay — what need to trouble about, since we can never definitively certify nor explain what is meant? Why not take the story just as Moses found and took it, — rough, primitive, broken, patched with different versions, graphically startling in some extremes of statement, after the manner of human repetitions, — yet nevertheless the conveyance of a fact; the assurance of a stupendous something which surely did happen, and behind and in whose happening was the working of the mighty purpose which created and controls the world and man, *always for good, and always against evil?*

How can we fail to see that this was what Moses found in it, and that this was the wheat which he gathered and garnered up, whatever remaining chaff of its first outgrown growth yet clung about it? That this is the chief thing he believed about it all, and held worth while in preserving the record, is simply plain.

A great Destruction came, and a special salvation was provided. The man who walked with God and received his commandment, and "did according to all that God commanded him," had his way shown to him, and escape made: he was shut into a perfect safety while "the waters prevailed upon the earth," and was borne to a mountain-top, — an island in the great deep uplifted from immovable foundations, to be the centre of a new world for him and his descendants. And he "built an altar" there, and made a fresh, "clean offering" to the Lord; and the Lord "smelled the sweet savor" of it and entered into solemn "co-venant" — coming together — with the man; meeting his simple sign of faith on His own supreme part with a promise: that "while the earth should remain, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, should not fail."

"I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake: the imagination of man's heart is evil *from his youth*."

Is it a straining of interpretation to suppose that this word may be akin to that which came to David: "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust"?

God will not add any more or needless

hardships for us; He will help us to endure and overcome those that are and must be. He knows that man is but as in a childhood and a youth, — in his mere beginnings, — upon the earth.

Perhaps already the objection may arise which is sometimes urged against such occult understandings and interpretations of the Scriptures: why are the real meanings so overlaid and hidden? Why must there be such painstaking, such research, such laborious finding out of something beyond the letter? Why are the things we need most to know not made directly apparent in simple statement?

Because they *are* the hidden, the deep things, the things of heart and spirit and of spiritual apprehension, that can only be indicated — not exhaustively set forth — by that which is outwardly experienced. Because human life is an outcome of essential truth, and essential truth must be read back from it, and within it. Because all mysteries and knowledges and faiths are but for the revelation of the living heart of things, which is the Heart of Love, which is the Heart of

God. Can we know God's heart at a glance, in a hurry, and does it lie on the outside of the things manifest from it?

The persons who rebel most readily against the need of deep reach and insight in the understanding of the Bible will study eagerly what later, lesser human writings mean; they cannot search too centrally for the intents of Dante and Milton, of Shakespeare and Browning: a new reading, a fresh significance, is hailed with enthusiasm, with exultation; cleverness, and the delight of apprehension, are proved and gratified; the greatest poets are often measured as greatest by their obscurities, which are taken for granted as profundities. Underneath it all is a strong, latent satisfaction in the truth that it takes somewhat of genius to comprehend Genius. Even so, "the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned." If we can see them, only in a little, we are glad, because we find that our own souls can breathe the heavenly air: we, too, are spiritually alive.

It is not what any story tells us, merely as a story, that moves our thought and feeling, centrally; it is the human nature, experience, want, hope, sympathy, that it stirs within us;

it is the realizing sense of what may be, and is, in human life, and the promise and possibility of it ; it is the strengthening for our own need which we get from the history of others ; their endurings, helps, leadings, rescues, salvations. This is what hands stories down, not merely from lip to lip, but from heart to heart. They are all representations, parables ; as such the meaning behind them is the thing we look for, whether consciously or not. It is what the patriarchs felt in the significance of their old-family traditions ; it is what they told them for, from father to son ; it is what Moses found in them, and believed, and indorsed, and went on to understand God's further revelation by, — and so, now that they have come down to us, it is but the simplest, most direct apprehension, and no mystical wresting or changing, to take the text as the envelope of an innermost truth ; just as true to-day as it was when Abraham sat in his tent door and told the old tales over to the boy Isaac, the son of his old age, and made known to him his own certainty of the wonderful covenant-making of the Lord God with himself, when the Word came to him in an intimate, personal revelation, an

“appearing” of the Most High, saying to him, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.” And when Abram fell upon his face, listening with a holy fear and awe, “God *talked* with him,” he told his child, and said to him yet more clearly, “Behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.” We shall come to this presently, when in the Mosaic record we find the origin and basis of all Hebrew faith in the great Belief of Abraham.

Before we leave the lesson of the Ark, however, we may surely interpret it into our own lives, as the patriarchs and Moses did into theirs, and on the same lines of distinct insight and assured personal trust.

The Lord will help every one of us to build his ark; and to the safety of it He will himself shut each man in. The environment of life surrounds us with limit, hindrance, shelter; and on the great waters of the flood of being and event, He will cause us to be borne to the Mountain of His Rest.

He will shut us in with *our own*; in home and family He will protect and save us, and

bring us *together* to the Land of the New Beginning. All that ministers and belongs to our true life shall be saved with us, and shall come forth, with old, familiar dearness and use, after the death-deluge, upon the new earth, under the new heavens. All the length and breadth and depth and height of our experience, through which we are to come to our full and final and safe possession, are minutely ordered and adapted by himself. He puts the building, as it seems to us, into our own hands; but He provides, directs, measures for us, all the way through. If we follow his plan, obey his word, our ark is a sure abiding and a certain survival. If we choose rather to drift on without Him, we are swept into wild waters, and, for the time being, perish.

Our ark is to be of "gopher-wood;" the wood of the hard, century-enduring, ever-green and living tree; that does not lose its leafage,—that is full of a rich, conserving, purifying, sweet-breathing balsam. Pine,—fir,—cypress,—cedar,—of whatever variety the "gopher-wood" may have been, it belonged to this sweet, noble order; typical of everything strong, calm, beautiful, precious, and long-lasting.

“Within and without,” the Ark was to be “pitched” with the fragrant resin of the tree, to keep the waters out, and the strength intact; it was the essential principle, joining, keeping sound, defending the whole structure.

One window, *open upward*, was to light it all; one door, for going out or coming in, was to be provided; there was to be neither access nor egress otherwise than divinely permitted and commanded; and the door was to be set in the side, serving the three levels and parallels of the “stories.” This is unstrained suggestion of the three levels, or “degrees,” of human being and relation,—the natural, the spiritual, the celestial; the three entrances and outlets of the Life given unto man.

Is this “mysticism” in the sense of the unreal? Or is not all that is vitally real most surely mystical, in the sense of reaching into and drawing from the secret and sacred?

All life, and all food for life, are gathered into every man’s ark, share for share, representatively. There is nothing God has made upon the earth that is not made for every soul, in its portion and degree. It may be but imprisoned, scarcely known or accounted of, for the interval; but it is there; it is all wait-

ing to be set free ; it is for food, use, pleasure, in the great coming, fulfilling time. When everything outside in the earth shall perish, something of all shall have remained, been housed, stored up, for the restoration ; and all, in a new increase and abundance, shall be given again to men.

Out of the window of the Ark goes forth, first, the raven ; the strong-winged bird, eager and seeking ; the confident expectation that keeps its unfaltering flight to and fro about the Ark, above the waters, until the waters are dried away. And then the tender dove may be let loose, — the loving hope, the timorous desire ; and she finds at first no visible rest, but returns into her old shelter and patience ; then she goes forth again, and lo ! the young olive branch, in its pale, fresh green, stirs in the gentle wind that breathes over the uncovered hillside, and the new, cleansed earth is reborn to the eternal light !

If there is anything in this different from what Moses, and Abraham, and the Hebrew people as children of the living God, must have felt in their hearts and believed and found their help in, when they heard and told

again the story of the Flood, and the Ark, and the Mountain of Rest and Regeneration, we may, if we will, call the tale a useless fable, and reject its authority ; but if our own hearts find and feel it full of this reality, it is to us the Testimony, and we need not trouble nor cavil about mechanical details, or uncertainties of verbal representation. For why was fable ever invented, but to convey something so infinitely and intensely true that no mere single, literal history can hold or express it all ?

Christ spoke in parables ; the world was built in parables ; human history goes on in parables, of which each separate chronicle holds a meaning for the race. And all these things are so enshrined, that in due time they may come forth ; as the facts of Creation come forth to human knowledge from their safe sepulture in the silent, age-worn rocks.

“Ye shall know, if ye follow on to know the Lord.”

“What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

“I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. The Spirit shall bring all things to your remembrance.”

“He that is instructed unto the kingdom of

heaven is like unto an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Old Parson Robinson said it to the Holland Pilgrims. "There is yet great light to break forth from the word of God." And the children of the Pilgrims, through their very inherited loyalty to the Word, and its letter as infolding the Word, may blessedly find it so, in face of all radical overthrow and shallow contempt.

So, the deeper we look into the primitive formations of human thought, the grander, more interior, vital meanings and revelations we shall discern; not by arbitrary or fanciful constructions, but by simple inseeing, and the recognition of the unity of the particular form with the larger spiritual reality.

There is still a more profound meaning, therefore, than we have yet touched in this study, in the testimony of the Ark; we find it if we reverse the word, and say — as was said later — the Ark of the Testimony. For it is there, already, hidden in the story of Noah, and his building under the instruction of God.

He could never — no man can ever — build an outside ark, unless he had the Ark inside

him. The pattern of *things* must always be in the *heavens*.

In the inmost heaven of a man's soul is a centre God makes for himself. It is the "Ark of the Co-venant;" the Place of the Coming-Together of God and the man; the "secret place of the Most High;" the "closet" man enters into when with "shut door" he holds communion with his Maker. It is the place that may not be profaned; the "house of prayer" that may not be made "a den of thieves."

This is where God gives a man from himself, his individual nature; where He says to him, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." It is where all real Thought and Consciousness begin; the vital point of union between the Infinite and the finite; from which lesser thoughts, knowledges, and their ultimations flow forth, which seem to the man his own thinkings and life. It is the centre from which only he is truly alive. When he abides in the mere outer senses of his mind, believing them all his own and all of himself, cutting off from heavenly source and consciousness, — making play-*things* of his separated fancies and self-impulses, — he confuses and perplexes

all the true relation of his living. He departs from God, and begins to die. The branch is lopped off from the tree, and slowly perishes.

So, — let us read through the parable, and remember, — it was out of the Ark of God's Rest within him that "Noah" — the man whose name was "Rest" — built the outer vessel that bore his life, and the lives that were of his own and his full inheritance of being from the Lord, unto "Ararat," — the "Holy Land," — the Mountain of God's Holy Presence, and man's final Rest in Him.

One word — one interpretative key — is set throughout to the unlocking of the successive doors of the whole grand revelation.

PART III

THE GOD OF THE PATRIARCHS

CHAPTER I

THE LIGHT OF THE LIVING

WHAT Abraham believed comes into the Mosaic record. It came into the life of Moses ; it was the root of the belief of Moses.

In the third generation from Shem, the eldest son of Noah, according to the genealogy in Genesis, the great "dividing of the earth," and the scattering of the multiplied families abroad to make new centres, — yet always in *families*, though the *nation* was broken up, and its very language confused into dialects, — took place.

The one great people, using all its material resources together, had grown powerful and daring ; it thought by material force to reach and possess not only the earth, but by force and progress to build itself up into the very heaven ; to lay hold of the very sources of power.

Is the story of the Tower of Babel any whit different from the story of any earthly building since, in any age, even our own, when achievement in the natural and tangible makes men bold to say, "Go to: we are coming into the command of all things; all things are ours by the conquering of our intellect and strength; there is no spiritual or unknown absolutely beyond our attainment by brave, persistent climbing on steps of the actual, the practical; we can ascend into what has been supposed the mystical, the super-sensible, by firm foothold on the positive, the concrete; *there is no other way on, or up?*" We build towers upon solid earth, and say it is the sole foundation; forgetting that God set the earths themselves afloat on the invisible; that He has hung the round world in an intangible infinity, that so by the word of his will only it shall be upheld and moved.

No wonder if in the rude ages men thought to scale the unreachable by a huge physical structure piled upward from the ground and making foothold into heaven. It was the same presumption of grasping the eternal and controlling it in the sensuous and apparent. Babel and the Pyramids are the crude witness

of the Past ; the dynamo and the electric wire are the testimony of to-day. They climbed ; we penetrate. They sought to set foot beyond earth-boundaries ; we to lay our hands upon the secret motive force of things, and wield and steer the planet.

On the low, flat, rockless plain they made their essay ; with false, imperfect, crumbling substance ; bricks, — their own poor moulding and contrivance, — instead of everlasting stones ; and slime — the mere ooze and mud of earthliness — to hold their work together, instead of the strong cementing of the rock-particles themselves, slaked with a pure, living water.

And God looked upon their futile work. “ The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.”

And He said : “ This is their one united thought and purpose ; they are the whole, single human strength, with a single, mistaken human thought ; and this is the thing that they will do. They are of one common speech, one common wish ; but they do not truly, inwardly understand ; therefore the outward, seeming understanding shall be broken up.”

God works by Law ; by fulfilling law, and not by breaking it. By its own inherent weakness, the mutual word and counsel concerning their false undertaking fell into dire confusion ; in their very language they became unintelligible to each other. It is the way of the False : the miracle of the True is that each man hears in his own tongue the Word that is spoken. What is more unintelligible than human speech without identical comprehension ? They drifted away from their own centre ; they " scattered " *themselves* " upon the face of the earth." The text says, " the Lord did scatter them abroad : " so He did, just as He " hardened Pharaoh's heart ; " by the inevitable working of moral, spiritual cause and effect.

And so, from Shinar, the augmented multitude of the tribes, too vast to keep longer in one commonwealth, dispersed itself abroad through Asia ; and still the generations of the families went on, and the peoples grew ; and in various quarters and divisions established themselves separately, and by separate influences grew farther and farther apart, and strange, — the one folk from the other, — in tongue, in habits, in thought and theory, and

in the practical ordering and expression of life.

Four generations succeeded, after this division, — from Peleg to Terah ; in the fifth, we find the son of Terah, Abram ; born a Chaldean, living with his father Terah and his wife Sarai, in Haran, Mesopotamia.

And now we come to what we are looking for,— the Faith of Abraham.

It was in him before the “new name,” with the great Promise in it, was given to him ; when he was simply and grandly, *Abram*, “*father of height*.” One asks what this can mean of him, other than that he reached, in his faith toward God, his conscious “walking with Him,” the height of human nature ; a life in which man’s sonship to the Divine inherits all, and can but become father, handed down of the same life and inheritance, to the multitude who shall follow in his line, and believe after him, and “walk,” also, “before God in the light of the living.”

Abram believed that God leads the individual man ; concerns himself with individual hopes and needs ; appoints to the single soul its way, and brings every son of his as by the hand, into “the land that He will show him.”

To him God clearly "appeared." The Divine word came down into his thought, his heart; he had not to pierce heaven for it, nor go down into the deep. It was with him; nigh to him; in his own hearing, in his own mouth. The things that made themselves felt within him were the impulses of God's Will in his behalf; before he could think, for himself, the thoughts were in God for him. When his thinking—in this faith, under this leading—took word, it was the speech of God, and he listened.

"It is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." He knew this. And *knowing it*,—and *looking above himself*,—he saw the sign; he was sure of his path. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Listening and believing, watching and obeying, never hasty with his own impetuous reason and desire, but waiting for the certain counsel of the Spirit, he began that intimate fellowship with the One Invisible and True, which all the emblem-worship of fire and sun and star taught by Chaldean seers could never realize.

And with this in his heart, and as a commandment in his ears, he went forth from Haran with his wife and his nephew, and his people ; childless, but believing that somehow, whether he had child or no, the word of God to him should be true, — “ In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” To do God’s errand, God’s way, whether he could see through it or not, — this was the faith, this the obedience, of “ faithful Abraham.” It was the self-same thing that Saint Paul, in the new Dispensation, preached as the “ life by the faith of the Son of God,” who had been fully manifested in the flesh ; writing to the Galatians all that beautiful, urgent exhortation of the third chapter of his epistle, concerning the receiving of the Spirit, and the “ hearing of faith,” — “ even as Abraham believed God,” and “ before the gospel ” was told of Him, “ In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.”

“ So then,” he declares, “ they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

CHAPTER II

CONSECRATION AND SACRIFICE

THIS being the faith of Abraham concerning God, as the Giver and Director of all life and circumstance, — as the Lord of Hosts because the Lord and Leader of each separate, conscious soul, and no other possible way; — that He is indeed the Life and the Surrounding; that what we have learned to call Environment is simply the compassing about, the preventing, the following, of the one Eternal, living Spirit, according to the laws of an infinitely comprehending love and wisdom, in all things that concern and befall a man; — there was directly involved with such belief a corresponding sense of man's side of the relation; a perception that human life is the "coming-together," or "co-venant" of God and man, the Soul creating and the soul created, in an experience given to each individual as a sole, peculiar illustration from among the infinite possibilities of an infinite being.

God divides himself: He lets each one live with Him — as it were, for Him — a piece of his life. He shares — deposes — his personality. It is the Communion; the Body broken and distributed: the current of his own Heart-flow poured into human receptivity and consciousness. The New Testimony in Christ has revealed this; but away back in Abraham was a germ given of the glorious faith, and a dim resulting conception of man's due and blessed share in the accorded relation. This latter formed itself to the understanding and conscience of Abraham in two leading ideas and claims of righteousness on his own part, as answering to such grand, condescending Righteousness of God on his behalf.

And these were, Consecration and Sacrifice.

The man's life, taken from God's hand, sustained and surrounded by his continual gift and providence, is a holy, sure, and happy thing. It is guaranteed by a promise, and the promise is implied from the beginning, in the very making of a man in the Maker's image, to be a representative of Him, in thought and love, in definite power, purpose, action. "Every good gift and every perfect

gift" was assured already in the mind of Him "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Yet beyond, and moreover, that man might know this mind of God, and give himself willingly to its working out, the revelation came to him in the strong word of the Lord in his very soul: "Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." This was the Oath of the Immutable; the solemn covenant understanding that He made with man, in the early simplicity in which man was able to hear his voice; "so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie," — the divine, original act of a Will that never retracts, and the word spoken into the human spirit, which has repeated itself in the hope and expectation of every human spirit since, — "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge" from all mortal doubts, dismays, and uncertainties, "to lay hold on the hope set before us, sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" of all the hidden mysteries.

Simply inevitable, then, it is, that man's part of the covenant should be obedience and trust; a rendering back of life into God's

hand, to shape it as He will ; a self-surrender, from the beginning and always, to the Divine authority and care. Everything was to be sacred ; everything was to be a service, an offering. The recognition of this obligation, in its two sublime elements, found expression with Abraham in outward rite ; the ceremonial circumcision, and the ceremonial sacrifice. The one was the initial token of the other. Both were signs of the one essential fact,—that man is God's, and that from first to last, from inmost to uttermost, in all the power of being and all the outcome of action, he is a form of the Will of God ; consciously joyful in that Will and in its Force, that are lent to him as his own, that he may know so much as a single soul in an endless life may know, of what God can think and feel and do, on the line of one continuous and beautiful intent and possibility. This is to have part in the " manifold wisdom of God ; " to be in relation with every other part, and to have sympathetic knowledge of all. It is to share in the " unsearchable riches of Christ ; " to be " heirs of God, and joint heirs with his Son ; " to " comprehend with all saints the breadth and length and depth and height ; "

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to "know the love of God which passeth knowledge," and to be "filled with all the fullness of God."

"This do in remembrance of me," comes to be, in the full revelation, the grand and gracious bidding, in every least partaking of life, each drop and morsel of particular experience, to take something out of the Divine Heart and Being into our very own.

The beginning of such living with God was in the faith and obedience of Abraham. It was the centre of his belief. *What* he believed, we may safely believe with him; to the *form* and expression of his belief, in detail or limitation, we are not bound down. We have our teaching of to-day direct from the same Spirit that talked with him; in our new circumstance, we have our own new showing, as truly as he had when he was led out of Haran in Mesopotamia, across the Euphrates into the country of Canaan.

So we may go on to read of his interpretation and expression of Sacrifice without being troubled by his methods or mistakes, — the great underlying truth of Sacrifice, or loyal rendering up of the very life itself continually, being ours, as it was his. And the com-

fort of his mistakes is, that *God set them right*; he was God's man through them all, and he was not left alone to the limitations of his own outer judgment; but the inner inspiration and the gentle outer compelling were with and around him unfailingly.

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people forever."

Abraham had but the beginnings of the great Belief which is the full knowledge of God, and of his Christ in man; which itself is "life eternal."

Sacrifice and Atonement are simply and only the "Co-venant," the Coming-together, — the At-one-ment, — of the Holy and the Imperfect, which mean the Infinite and the incomplete. The Infinite, working always in the finite to completion, comes into this life of man by degrees, as the human, led and trained by God's Providence, can be prepared to receive it. And the more can only be given in response to the offering of the less. It is the living interchange between God and man. It is the movement and inter-relation of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; the infinite elements and essential

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relations of the Divine Nature, taking three-fold form always in creation and revelation from a Threefold Being.

Father and Son, — Origin and Begetting ; Spirit, — the living Power and Proceeding of this eternal generation ; the One, and mutual Life.

God is continually making the human out of the Divine. We feel, therefore, our conscious life in, its two parts, the spiritual and the natural ; we have soul and body ; we have essence and circumstance.

Sin is the divorce of soul and sense. It is a living from the separated inferior half of the dual nature. Redemption and restoration are the joining of them together again.

Christ hath broken down the middle wall of partition, making the two one.

The Coming of the Kingdom is the establishment of the doing of the Will *in heaven and in earth*. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness.

The Heart-sacrifice is the offering of the heart-life. The blood of the sprinkling, upon the doorposts and garments, is the consecra-

tion of every outside thing of living, — the wearing of all circumstance, which is the form-
raiment of existence, and the goings out and
comings in in the sight of the Lord, in this
glad and willing “bloodshedding,” which is the
simple pouring forth along God’s channels, in
his love and service, of the very currents of
men’s being. It is not a casting away, or a
destruction ; it is a living use and fulfillment.

This is the true Passion Sign ; the passing
over of human desire and purpose to the divine
intent and commandment ; and the Lord’s re-
sponse to it is absolution and remission, — a
setting free from, and putting utterly away,
— of the separating evil ; a reconstructing in
the *wholeness* which is *holiness*, of what God
from the first put together, but man has put
asunder ; a leading back into the quietness
and rest of a perfect harmony of the inward
and the outward. Good-will, — God’s-will, —
is Peace on Earth ; the reconciling of the
heavenly and everlasting with the circumstan-
tial and transitory. The apparitions of heaven
and earth may change, progress, pass away ;
the Word of God shall not pass away, but
shall be continually spoken. It shall take
new, grander, more glorious form, for ever

and ever. There shall always be form ; there shall always be a land, and a home ; there shall be "world without end," though there "shall be no more sea," to divide, to dislocate. For "world" is but the clothing and substantiating of the heavenly, ineffable Thought of God. There shall be world, — a Word, — while God shall continue to think. "In the Father's house are many mansions ;" and "we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

When we read of Blood, in the Old Covenant or in the New, it will relieve all our perplexities and set aside all our disputes, if we render it, in our understanding, as what it truly signifies, — Heart-life. The blood of the old sacrifice was the sign, in an extreme realism, of this holy offering and surrender of *life* to the Lord. We are "made clean by the Blood of Christ," when his Life, by a spiritual transfusion, is given into our own, and becomes its essential force, its sanctifying, holy-making, grace. There is no other redemption. All the rest is sign — fulfillment in the outward — of this. Christ gave his bodily blood, in the perfect and absolute sacrifice,

in man's name, and for man's sake, of the all of himself, spirit and body, to his Father. He was lifted up, that he might draw all men after him. After that, Christ dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion ; but in natural and spiritual, inward and outward, substance and sign, heaven and earth, *Life*, from God the Father and through his Son, flows on, triumphant and eternal.

And this Gospel, this Revelation, this Prophecy, is the one grand meaning of all the Holy Scripture, Old and New. It is the heart of all parable ; it is the reason and interpretation of all ordinance.

Symbolism is language in its essentials. It is the expression of the unity of the outer with the inner life ; the translation of the spiritual by the natural. All speech is an effort toward this ; all speech is derived from symbols, which *are* speech. The word of God has gone forth into all the world.

A wonderful thing happened to Abram very early in his migration from Mesopotamia to Canaan, — from heathendom to the land where the light should dwell. After his brave conflict with the four savage kings, the rescue of Lot, and the generous fraternizing with the

friendly border monarchs, he was met by Melchizedek, "priest of the most high God," who came forth to him bearing bread and wine; the Holy Supper.

A priest of God is one who feels and interprets the signs of God; who can thus handle the mysteries of the word of life, and give God's message to men.

Food and drink are sacraments. The receiving of them is the receiving, by material medium, the Divine Force by which we live and grow. To do this consciously and reverently, is to eat and drink "worthily."

This daily partaking and outward nourishing is sign again and continual reminder of the way that all things are of God, and of Him are made "the power of an endless life" to us, in our experience and understanding. Bread and wine are circumstance and inspiration. Circumstance and inspiration are as bread and wine. They are body and spirit. The one builds up our form of life,—the other *informs* it with the conscious thought and love and power which from the very Soul of God make living souls of us.

To take the Holy Supper, as God has made it and as Christ gave it, is to enter in, con-

sciously, to this direct, continual, dependent, happy relation with the Lord God. To make sign of it, by the eating of the sacred bread and the drinking of the sacred wine, is to especially realize and openly confess it. This is the Communion Ordinance of the Christian Church.

Melchizedek brought the bread and wine to Abram in solemn significance. It was a foreshowing of what should be fully declared and revealed to all men by Him who is "a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Did Abram know, and believe, all this, at that very time? We remember that we are searching out what Abraham believed; what it was given him to know of God. But is belief always formulated? Is intuition always translated? Does the mind always say to itself, in word and syllable, what the heart apprehends?

God always gives us the next thing. Abram received in his soul the command and the life from God, and then and therefore the sign was given him. Something whose fullness of meaning should expand afterward to his thought, was presented to him in outward

ceremony. The possibility of his understanding — the power of heavenly things — was already born in him, as it was in the disciples, even while they perceived but dimly the present word and act of their Lord. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," is what God continually says to us in his highest, deepest parables. Of all parables, the parable of food and drink is the most intimate, the most evident and continual, the most inclusive. It is our satisfying. It is daily gift meeting daily want. Bread for the building of the body, — wine, or water, for the refreshing, recreating of the spirit. The body of life is to be God's righteousness; our circumstance is to be act and form after his commandment. Goodness is the Good. "Nourish us with all goodness," the Church prays; and again, "that our bodies may be made clean by his body." And the wine is the very inspiration of the Divine; the innermost, vital supplying. "Our souls, washed with his most precious blood;" flooded, regenerated by the tide that from the very Heart of Him fills our hearts, and changes them to his own nature from all debasements. The "holy mysteries" are the "spiritual food" of body

and blood, by which we are "made members incorporate in the mystical Body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people."

And these "holy mysteries" are in our common daily partaking; the rite is but the symbol, the reminder. True ritualism makes all living a Sacrament.

As a common refreshment, Melchizedek offered the bread and the wine to Abram; his very offering of it so was its everlasting significance.

CHAPTER III

THE MISTAKE OF ABRAHAM

THE Hebrew Patriarch was a man ; subject, therefore, to limitation and mistake. From the simplest natural life he was just brought into the beginning of the spiritual ; how should he at once see all things absolutely and in their full and final relation ? He was great in the power of faith, but in the infancy of its development. In his expression of belief, he might easily fall into an error. What would the Bible be to us, if the Believers of whom it is the Record halted in no partialities of understanding, made no misapplication of the truth, in their endeavor to grasp its completeness and to bring it to daily form and practice ? We should simply not be able as human beings to accept the story. We should say, It is a myth, a dream, a fable of Utopia. We should be further from recognizing the Revelation that is in it than we are now, when we stumble at the literal chronicles of spiritual

experience, and at the flaws of character and of judgment that warped the divine intent and commandment to narrow uses and applications ; or that even debased them with unworthy subterfuge, thinking so to carry out God's supreme purpose and — anticipating the later corruption of the Christian Church — to justify the means by the end. There was all this admixture of the fallible with the infallible in the day of Abraham, which has continued to be until our own. " We have the treasure in earthen vessels." Shall we therefore cast away the vessel, treasure and all ?

Abraham was born and trained a Chaldean. He had been used to the worship of the elements ; he had witnessed the horrible rites of human sacrifice. Out of this he had come to the knowledge that God is a Spirit, the creating Force of the visible elements ; and to the perception that a sacrifice to Him can be no infliction of pain and death upon helpless vicarious victims, but must be the *giving of one's own*. Something out of a man's own life, — his dearest and best, — his very life itself, if demanded, — must be offered up, in sign and proof that the man is wholly God's. Abraham got thus far out of the old pagan

darkness and violence. He brought down — or it was given to him to apprehend and apply — the idea of sacrifice to the individual concern of every soul with its Maker ; a something that lay between the Lord God and his child ; a rendering up, out of special personal life, a gift to the Giver ; a testimony of inmost, uttermost human witness to the supreme testifying of the Eternal Spirit.

Of his flocks, of his herds, of the work of his hands ; of his desires, his affections ; of his purposes, acts, choices ; of all that was his, of all that was himself, — the best, the strongest, the cleanest, — was offering to be made. This was sacrifice ; this was making sacred ; this was, in everything, “Holiness to the Lord.” And this it was in Abraham’s heart to do.

Was there anything that he could not relinquish ? Was there anything too good, too dear, to give up to God ? This searching problem faced him with its deep demand, as it has in all ages faced the earnest, devout, self-scrutinizing spirit. And Abraham answered within himself, “I must give to the Lord my son, even my son Isaac.”

God let him think so. It was true. He

must give his best love, in all perfect consecration ; he must give his son — by all example, counsel, motive, training — to the Divine Hand and Will, to make of and through them whatsoever that Power and Purpose would. This was the word of God, away down in the secret being of the man, out of which the fancied message came ; in coming up thence it took shape in the man's fashion of thought, in the mind-working that he had only thus far grown to ; and he thought he heard God say, " Lay thy son Isaac upon the altar. Give up his life to me. Slay him with the knife, and burn him with the fire."

And Abraham took the knife, and laid the wood upon the shoulders of the boy Isaac, and led him up into the mountain.

But when he had builded the altar, and piled the wood, and bound his child upon it for the sacrifice, the true voice came out of the inner heaven to his soul, — "*Lay not thy hand upon the lad !*"

And Abraham looked — *behind him* ; and lo ! a ram caught in a thicket by the horns.

Back — into his own life — into motive, spirit, influence ; into the hard shaping of old, false, cruel teaching ; into the thicket of per-

plexities, the tangle of selfish hopes and true devotions, propitiatory desire and fervor of real renunciation, — God made him look, and see where was the coarse, brutal, hard thing in himself, that must be slain ; not the sweet, tender, natural human affection, but the distorted motive with its twisted, torturing horns, the secret evil greed, the disguised sin, that must be renounced, destroyed, in the name of the Lord God, and for the sake of his beautiful righteousness. It was the first, half-comprehended whisper of the interior, heavenly significance of all ritual offering, of all outward surrender, which alone makes oblation holy ; it was the first stirring of the new sense, the hidden interpretation of typical requirement ; it was the beginning of what David came to know and declare as commandment : “ Stand in awe, and sin not. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.” “ Thou desirest not sacrifice ; thou delightest not in burnt offering ; the sacrifices of God are a *broken* ” (significantly in the Hebrew *passive*, — not *self-shattered*) “ spirit ; a broken and a *contrite* ” (again in the passive, — one that has *suffered* bruising) “ heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” The *accepting* of pain,

that comes by God's permission, in the way of obedience; not the seeking, the assumption, of suffering, for any merit's sake. Abraham had a far, faint foreshowing of this, the "full, perfect, and sufficient satisfaction" of the Christ, who "when He cometh into the world, saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body" — a way and form of life — "thou hast prepared me: lo, I come to do thy will, O God."

All the way between Abraham and Jesus was continued the sign, and all the way was repeated the experience, that only with pain, only with giving up, in the mere body of life, can the spirit of life be made regnant. All the way from the coming of Christ, and the suffering of Christ in the flesh, to the coming again "without sin unto salvation," must the experience go on. There is always to be an altar in the earth; under "the golden altar that is before God" in heaven, are the souls of them who have suffered, and who ask, How long, O Lord, is it to be? Wearing their white robes, they are bidden to "rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were, *should be fulfilled.*"

It is the sign; it is the mystery. The "glory that shall be revealed" alone can explain it. But we need mistake nothing. We are to court no suffering; to refuse no pure happiness; to outrage no truth of our nature. We are to slay nothing but the ram in the thicket. We are not to impose or to inflict upon ourselves; we are to leave our discipline to God; we are to bear only that to which we are called; to "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, *that He may exalt us in due time.*"

The secret of the old ceremonial, done away in Christ, is the secret of the tender *chastisement* — the *pure leading* or even *driving* — of Him who himself is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," — "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities."

Something of this lovely relation of the human to the Divine — this submissive, trusting, obeying sonship — was revealed to Abraham.

"Your father Abraham," said Jesus to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."

CHAPTER IV

THE PATRIARCHAL CHARACTER

BETWEEN the revelation of the faith to Abraham and its development by Moses, lies the story of the lives in which this faith was doing its primitive work.

We must remember that it was primitive.

Abraham believed God.

Yet even in his highest faith he fell into mistake.

Abraham believed God as close beside him ; in his daily common life. He believed in the Angel of the Presence.

Nevertheless, in daily, common life, he failed, went wrong.

Yes ; *just as we do*. Therein lies our comfort, even to this day of what should be our larger, deeper faith.

Therein surely lay the comfort and the hope of the generations after Abraham, and before the Christ, who as men called Abraham father, claimed the Promise, and believed that yet in the line of Abraham should "all nations of the earth be blessed."

The faith of Abraham was in him the *beginning* of righteousness. It is the beginning — the first creation and the only source — of righteousness in us.

It was "*counted* to him for righteousness."

God accredits beforehand. He "*imputes*" that which shall be. This was what Paul found out, as the secret of "*faith and works*;" the saving, — the making sound, — in inmost principle and power, by one; the ultimating, — the beautiful, perfect, eternal evolution, in the other.

The one is the "*moving of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters*." The other is the lovely, orderly creation; the appearing in things visible of the inmost Word.

It comes by degrees. First, the Light. Then the things that live in the light.

God is not impatient with his creation. He takes the long six days to work it out in. On the seventh He will rest, and say that it is good.

Abraham undeniably had his weak human side, and its human contradictions. On the one hand were his visions of the Divine, in which he was exalted to be the "*friend of*

God." On the other, he was but the Arab herdsman, the chief of a small wandering company, the husband of Sarah, a man environed with dangers, and living on the alert; driven, it seemed to himself, sometimes to subterfuges; afterward, in perplexing domestic circumstances, to the cruel repudiation of a woman and child — the child his own — who were helplessly dependent upon him.

Do we take these things as part of the *holy* story, — as sacred, and to be justified to all extreme because they are the doing of a man chosen by the Lord? Or are we to reject the belief that the Lord chooses and abides by any human life at all?

It was precisely *out* of these things that the man was chosen.

And what are we, that we may dare to judge? How far have we got beyond Abraham, even now, with our expediences and diplomacies, our laxities and rigidities, tolerances and intolerances, national, social, personal? Yet, is there *no* truth — no vision — among us?

God taught a great thing to Abraham, by a great and terrible event. Straight to the very

question the lesson went. Shall the evil — the ignorance — the debasement — upon the earth be reckoned without or against the good? Shall the evil be visited and condemned, and the good not be spared, reserved? Which shall be real, and endure, — the hindrance of unrighteousness, — of imperfection, even, — or the testimony of absolute uprightness? Which shall be final and universal, — the grovel and trail of the serpent upon the ground, or the attitude of the man before his God?

If there be ten true men in a city of thousands, — if there be one living truth, welcomed and beloved, in the soul of a man, — those ten, that truth, shall save the city, shall sanctify the life and continue it to its perfection.

Sodom and Gomorrah perished. Lot was saved out of the fire alive.

The fault of Abraham perished with the brief circumstance, the frail mortality, of Abraham. The faith of Abraham survives, a deathless witness, a sure inheritance, forever.

“Abraham gave all that he had to his son Isaac.” He gave him his worldly goods, send-

ing away the sons of his step-wives "unto the east country, with gifts."

He gave the word of his faith in Jehovah, and of God's Promise, to the son through whom the promise was to be fulfilled. He provided that Isaac should take a wife only by the leading of the Lord, and from among his own kindred in Mesopotamia, who believed also in the One Most High.

And Isaac received the wife, "fair to look upon," Rebekah, apportioned to him by the sign of God; and he believed also, after the faith of his father, and "intreated the Lord," in his turn, for the wish of his soul.

Withal, Abraham bequeathed to Isaac his own imperfections. He handed down to him his own possibilities of duplicity, his own narrow partiality. Isaac sinned against the truth precisely as his father had done; precisely as his father had done, he centred all his love unfairly upon one son, leaving Rebekah just as unfairly to cling to and scheme for the other. In this way, the fault of Abraham did not perish with his natural life, though with that it may have ceased out of himself.

And in Jacob all once more reappeared, with individual modifications, not certainly of

an ennobling quality. He was timid, selfish, time-serving, cunning.

Was he altogether different in these points of his human nature from the human nature of to-day? Are these things yet eliminated from the inheritance of the race, in its far-down transmission through the ages?

Was he at all a favorite of God because of them? Or was he helped of God, through simple faith, *against* them and in spite of them, to their overcoming?

Were his shifts and contrivances, his over-reachings, his crafts, any more incongruous with his spiritual fervors than the same things are to-day in the world of policies and shrewdnesses that is held as separate from the world of religious thought, observance, and even emotion, and confessed as "secular"? Is Jacob's Bethel any more a falsity and mockery in his life than are our own church spires that bristle all over a land given wildly, in another order and allowance, to the rushing greed, monopoly, self-seeking, of thousands of Jacobs eager only after their individual own?

What right have we to object to a beginning of faith that had to deal with such elements in the human soul, and after nearly

four thousand years has still to deal with them?

Nevertheless, the Church of God is in our midst, and in every believing man, as it was in the heart of Jacob; and it will save us yet.

Do we not need, in the spiritual history of the race, just such a showing of what God will do with just such a crude, mixed, warped, and vacillating human nature? Do we not need the great, merciful word to be spoken to *us*, — “I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed”?

Just because of the poor and pitiful part of his character, and its need, — that is ours also, — there is no sentence in all the blessed Scripture more dear and beautiful to us than this, — “The *God of Jacob* is thy refuge”!

If Jacob, *before he became Israel*, thought, in his narrow feebleness, that God’s care of him was a partial, exclusive one, — that there was nothing so important to the Divine plan, so close to the Divine sympathy, as his own little safety and interest, — that does not change the fact that this son of Isaac had hold of *his part* of the sure and beautiful

truth that "God is loving unto every man," individually and especially; that in his heart there is a place for each one that none other occupies; that God's thought goes into every detail of every life, and his love feels with every touch and throb of every human desire and pain and gladness. That Jacob only learned it as regarded himself was his own limitation,—his own loss. A man cannot receive more than he can hold, of whatever large and gloriously universal truth. That Jacob got what belonged to him, and lived his special life in a full faith, is all that we can look for in him, and it makes his witness just so far sufficient.

Spiritual life, like the physical, begins with a cell-form. Man is a unit. As the protoplasmic cell is a single *want*, to which the universe is supply and answer, so is the proto-soul a single receptacle, truly conscious of no other, hardly conscious of itself,—with only a self-longing to be filled and satisfied, from the Divine that it knows not yet to be Divine.

Even when it has become an organism, and man recognizes himself as a being of thought and growth and possibility, he is still a *sepa-*

rate man looking to a separate God. All first theology is selfish. Man is a baby, claiming a mother as all his own, without the faintest conception that she is mother to other children also. Religious theories begin in like manner. They narrow election and salvation to an accepted few.

Each of the old patriarchs chose one child out of many, to give all to; from his own partiality he came to believe in a partial God. This was not radical mistake as to a God at all, or his personal presence and providence, but only limit to the idea of what God could be.

Israel, as a nation, continued in this partiality. Holding the grand reality, that God was God, and *their* God, they knew no more than to stop there, though the word of the Lord kept telling them plainly that He was "the God of the whole earth," and that "all men should know that He was the Lord."

In their behalf, they thought; and got no further. The gathering in of the Gentiles,—the Gospel to a whole waiting world,—the "loving the neighbor as one's self," and so entering with the great love of the Lord into the wide joy of the Lord,—was a thing to

come, in the far-off revelation of a time and order yet to be.

We are not obliged to stop where they did. To do so would be never to arrive where they have long since arrived. To discard their faith because it had not all unfolded, would be to throw away the only possible beginning of the whole and best.

Even Jacob did attain. He did win from his God the new name of Israel. In this his experience, one more revelation was made manifest than even in the first high faith of Abraham — the revelation of *redemption*. That such faith can at last save a man out of meanness and falsity and cowardice, and make him generous and true and brave with the love of his brother and his fearless certainty of God.

“Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred ; and I will be with thee,” said the voice of the Lord to Jacob, after the twice seven years of service to Laban in Haran, and yet six more years in which he “provided for his own house also,” and grew rich, and “increased exceedingly.”

It is hardly sweet and of a simple assurance to read the mingled history just here ; the confusion of God's true word with the cunning promptings of a man's own mind to the outwitting of another man, and the calling this a heavenly inspiration. Perhaps Jacob had really gotten no more from Laban than he had faithfully earned in the long twenty years ; but it was surely not gotten in God's way. Doubtless it was quite time that he should be called from his successful stratagems and circumventions, and put in fresh and nobler relations with a past in which there was much that he should atone for.

There were fraud and contrivance in the departure. Rachel purloined her father's gods, and hid them with a falsehood ; and with all his household and his goods and his camels and his cattle, Jacob stole away secretly from Laban.

And Laban pursued and overtook him with not unreasonable complaint. They quarreled. They had it all out at last, — claim and reproach, accusal and justifying ; and both were so far right and so far wrong, and the interests of both were so far intermixed, that it ended in a treaty ; a covenant witnessed by

"an heap of stones," raised into a pillar, beside which they did eat together in a certain amity, and did promise, mutually, that never, for any harm, should either pass beyond this pillar to the other.

"And Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them; and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

Poor old Laban! Surely the same good Lord went back with him into his forlornness and old age, to comfort him, who went forward with Jacob and his wives and his children into the southward country, to the home of his youth.

"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him."

There is no mistaking when the angels of God do meet a man. He may deceive himself half his life with sophistries; he may parley and prevaricate with himself, and because he has once tarried at a Bethel, and had the ascending and descending beauty of a vision into the surrounding of the unseen, and heard a voice saying, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest," he may possibly persuade himself that his own after wishes and scheming suggestions

are of that same holy word and counsel ; he may overlay his faith with greed, and stint his obedience by fear, but he will never mistake when God's angels come again in earnest, and his life and motive shrivel in the flame of their pure presence, and a great winnowing wind sweeps through him in the stooping of their wings, before which all chaff of the vain and ignoble in him flies off, dispersing ; when some tremendous circumstance compels him, and tests him to the very centre of will and courage and resolve ; or when a tender light reveals to him the depths of his own spirit, and of the meanings of his past, and his missings and his forfeitings, and the love that he did not know but sinned against ; and a repentance searches him through and through, until the best of him aches and yearns and stretches out strong desire toward the returning and restoring that may yet be if God will ; when things like these happen, there is doubt neither in the man's own mind nor in the reading of his story.

God's angels came and met Jacob on the way toward Edom and his brother Esau. And he knew them, for both the peace and

the rebuke that were in their faces; and he said, "This is God's host; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim," — "the two hosts," or "the two camps." He knew that beside his tents were the tents of the invisible; that he was visited as of old by them who descended upon the great ladder "set up on earth, whose top reached into the heaven."

Surrounded with their tender influence, their reproach, their pleading, he sent forward men to find his brother, bearing gentle, beseeching message; that he had come back after all this time into the home country; not needing anything, for that he had gained much worldly goods, — "oxen, and asses, and flocks, and men-servants and women-servants." Not for any help, or to demand or seize anything of his brother's possessions; only to ask a welcome.

"I have sent to tell my lord," was the word of respectful homage, "that I may find grace in thy sight."

That meant all; forgiveness, reconciliation, brotherly unity again. The better part of Jacob's nature was stirred, and warm, and eager. He was coming home, to his old father, to his kindred in the south country, to

make his abode, with all that he had gained, among them. He wanted, he besought for, not only a peaceful permission, but a loving reception.

The messengers came back with their announcement: "We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him."

Why four hundred men? The conscious, fearful spirit of Jacob quaked instantly at this.

To do him honor? To emphasize with a splendid generosity the forgiveness of the old, and the kindly response to the new?

Jacob was not yet of such a generosity himself as to understand it so. He was "greatly afraid and distressed;" his old terrors got hold of him; he thought only of escape. He divided his people and his flocks into two bands; and said, "If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape."

Something double in the man always suggested the hedging with double chances. A finer nature would have gone forward with all, for mutual and entire defense, or for the sharing of whatever fate together. One com-

pany was to be sacrificed, that the other might be unobserved, or let alone. It was a throwing to the wolves.

What can be done with such a limp, uncertain, collapsing character as that?

God knew when He took it in hand.

Jacob fell a-praying. For himself, and for safety; for "the mother with the children." That last, and the confession, — "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of *all the truth which thou hast shewed* unto thy servant," — were the redeeming points in the appeals; they proved that in him which was redeemable.

Then he turned to his policy again; changed and ruled, doubtless, by the nobler instinct, the side of him that had spoken in the truest of his prayer. He would not wait to be attacked, and for his goods and following to be seized; he would send rich, ample gifts to Esau. He would show his brother that he had come to share; that the old grasping covetousness in him was outgrown, replaced.

He divided off, in hundreds, and thirties, and twenties, and tens, of his flocks and cattle; a magnificent portion of all; and he set them in separate droves, and said to his servants,

"Pass over," with them, "before me, and put a space between drove and drove." And he commanded each servant in charge to say to Esau, as he in turn came up with him, "They be thy servant Jacob's. It is a present to my lord Esau ; and behold, also he is behind us."

Restitution, compensation ; not friendly and beseeching words only. This would move the heart of Esau, convincing his clear, honest sense of right and right intent. "Afterward I will see his face ; peradventure," — after these, — "he will accept of *me*."

And that night he "took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok."

That night was the great crisis of his life.

The good and the worthless in him came to open issue.

"There wrestled a *man* with him until the breaking of the day."

True manhood, — the real man in him, represented or not by an outward objective presence, — against the petty, timorous, half-way, hindering self.

Only by some similarly intense vital experience, can this great conflict of Jacob with the angel be understood. It is not every soul

that is capable of such contradiction. Not every man comes to such direct question and grapple. He who does cannot be utterly contemptible.

There were two Jacobs in the struggle. The one, yet dominated by his lower impulse, not ready yet to yield to the angelic insistence and demand; the other, knowing that the heavenly *must* conquer or himself be lost, and crying out with passion and strain of counter-action, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"

Jacob was of an open spiritual nature. He was susceptible to influence from both realms of the unseen. Now the low and evil, through the natural, laid hold of him and moved his act; now the high celestial force swept down upon him and possessed him, so that he rose above his daily plane, and cast off his habitual hindrances and failings. Which man of him should overcome, outlast, and *be*, was the determination to which these alternating controls must, at some point in the making of him, arrive.

And this night the hour had come.

Alone with God's angel, till the break of

day, he strove, and tried conclusions. At last, the touch upon the very quick, the "hollow of his thigh," — the weakness where his power should be, — was laid by the finger of his holy foe. He felt that poor self of him confess to its own impotence and baseness. He knew, for the first time, and realized to his inmost shrinking consciousness, that his very being was out of joint.

"Thou art wanting," the convicting touch had said to him. "Here, where should be thy sinew and thy strength, — in thy very motive power, — thou art lame and halt. Thou canst not contend with me, neither wilt thou suffer me to prevail." — "Let me go; for the day breaketh."

It was like the cursing of the fruitless fig-tree; a declaring that the curse already was.

And then the human soul asserted its humanity, wherein it was the better of the tree. It turned against its own unworthiness, took side with the condemnation, and made its claim upon the eternal Life.

Surrendering and conquering at once, it cried out, "Angel of God, I will not perish! I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"

"What is thy name?" came presently the answer. "*What art thou? By what art thou known?*"

The searching question went down into all the man's memory and life.

"And he said, *Jacob*; I am *The Supplanter*."

"No more Jacob," fell upon his changed spirit the grand sentence of the angel, "but Israel. As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

The princely in him was awakened. Henceforth in the princely, — in the upright, in the highest of him as a man, — should he be known, remembered. He should be Israel. His children should be the Children of Israel; under that name a great nation before God.

Jacob had won at last his true birthright.

"I have seen God face to face," he said, "and my life is preserved."

And he called the name of the place "Peniel," — "The Face of God."

"And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh."

There must be, in the remainder of a life upon the earth, a loss, an impairment, where

there has been a sin. The reminder of his weakness was with Jacob; the touch of the angel remained upon the shrunken sinew, as he went upon his further way. Nevertheless, even halting, he went in the new strength of the Lord, and was at one with Him in the love of his brother.

In that common Divine love, the two of the same birth and the long alienation were reconciled.

In the place of his new home in Shechem of Canaan, Jacob built an altar and called it *El-elohe-Israel*. God, — the God of Israel: the God of the new man, and the Giver of the new name.

CHAPTER V

EGYPT

EVERY now and then, at high points of crisis in the Hebrew history, there was a sojourn in Egypt.

Abraham went down there, driven by famine, with Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son; and came back into the south country of Canaan, with all that he had gained there, at the generous command of the Pharaoh, after his deception with the king concerning Sarai.

Isaac, in like manner, for the same cause of want in his own country, journeyed far that way; but was forbidden actually to go over into Egypt, and stayed among the Philistines; upon whose king he practiced the self-same deceit that his father had done with the Pharaoh. He also grew exceedingly rich in the strange country, and came back to Beersheba, in the southmost limit of his own, and thence afterward a little farther north, to Hebron,

in the mountain lands that were to become a part of the portion of the tribe of Judah.

Joseph, the best beloved son of Jacob,—the boy of vision and mystic interpretations,—reading the inner signs of things by the prophetic gift, and finding in them a marvelous assurance of power and errand in his own life, which he in pure simplicity declared among his brethren,—sold by them in their anger and envy into a caravan of wandering Ishmaelites,—was sold again in Egypt; there to fulfill the high purposes that had been in a remote shadow revealed to him.

Famine again scourged Canaan. There was plenty of corn in Egypt. The brethren were sent down by their father Jacob, to buy and bring back of the abundance; and of their journeys it resulted that Joseph, splendid in power as governor and treasurer for the king, was made known to them.

Again it came to pass that the whole Hebrew family migrated to this land of luxury and magnificent mystery, where for centuries uncertain in their record they remained; at first prospering richly under the favor of the friendly monarch to whose confidence

and patronage the very seership of Joseph — scorned of his kindred, but believed in among the soothsayings of a people dimly touched with their own half-presciences — had raised him ; afterward, crushed down into abject slavery under cruel oppression by rulers who “knew not Joseph.”

Through Egypt, always, came the chosen to their higher promise. “Out of Egypt,” in the glorious fullness of time for his Gospel, did God even “call his Son.” There is grand significance in it all, from the beginning to the end.

Egypt is “Mizraim ;” the dual country ; the Upper and the Lower ; a land and nation rich and glowing in natural life, and wise with intellectual wisdoms.

Fertile to superabundance, the “granary of the world ;” refined in its domestic custom and relation ; finished in civilization ; cunning and expert in the industrial arts ; grand to sublimity in its architecture and monuments ; proud and dominant in arms and rule ; profound in knowledges ; far-reaching, even to the occult, in thought, — it was yet only a dual development. It had to do only with two planes of being, — the physical and intel-

lectual. In these it might be the very "centre and border of the earth," for depth of understanding and wide circuit of achievement; but it had not touched the third sphere. The spiritual was not opened to it.

Egypt was its own Sphinx; it was Reason and Materialism; a superb human head upon a correspondingly superb animal body. Egypt reared up the incomprehensible grandeur of the Pyramids, in the lines and numbers of the building of the universe; but the makers of the Pyramids reached not the eternal significance of lines and numbers; they builded beyond themselves, for an after interpretation.

There was a King's Chamber in the heart of the great structure; but it was a sealed darkness; it held an empty coffer.

The religion of Egypt was theoretical; its system was a zodiac of shining, indubitable signs, precisely studied and diagrammed; through it lay the apparent path of a great Sun; but Egypt stopped at the apparent, — the phenomenal; her philosophy did not penetrate to the heart of all appearance, the word of light whose movement through creation makes the manifest. Her myth ended in myth; her ladder had its foot upon the earth,

but its top ended short in the mid-air. The angels of God could not descend upon it.

Into this circumstance and civilization was drifted, — sent for keeping and for training, needing for a time just this habitat, — the germ of a spiritual faith; the life of a people who held the initial of a final, perfect truth, the key to the door of the heavenly. It seemed as yet but idle in their hands; they had not come where they could put its power to the full disclosure. It was to open to them all the doors; the natural should not be mere natural to them, nor the intellectual all of understanding; but access to the supreme is by the positive; the beginnings are in hieroglyphic. They must first sojourn in Egypt.

It was a long reach from Joseph to Moses.

We first find Joseph's insight manifesting itself in a divination of dreams and omens; an interpretation of parable-signs into meanings and tokens of that which should happen in the natural. This was his beginning in his youth, when he dreamed his own dreams about the stars of heaven and the sheaves of the harvest; the sheaves that his brothers

bound bending down and making obeisance before his own sheaf in the field ; and the yet more audacious and offending similitude of the sun and the moon and the eleven stars rendering homage to his presence.

Because of these arrogant prefigurements his brethren were indignant, and hated him ; and his father Jacob rebuked him. Nevertheless, Jacob, recollecting the dreams of his own youth, and their divine fulfillment, “ observed the saying,” and laid it by in mind.

After his betrayal into slavery, and his supposed death, — after his first surprising fortunes in Egypt, in the house of Potiphar, and the evil and malicious false accusation upon which he was cast into prison, — Joseph appears again in the exercise of his peculiar powers in the reading of the dreams of his fellow prisoners ; translating their auguries into the correspondent coming events, every particular of which undeviatingly took place.

All this was external, psychological ; but behind it we find presently the deep Hebrew conviction of the word and working of the Lord ; the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob asserting itself, when, the Pharaoh upon the

throne having been strangely visited by a dream which none could interpret, his officer remembered the "young man, servant to the captain of the guard," who had foretold his own happy reinstatement, and whom he had, with selfish heedlessness, left languishing in prison "two full years."

Summoned before the presence of the king, Joseph came, and listened to the demand that Pharaoh made: "I have dreamed a dream, and none can interpret it; I have heard say that thou canst understand a dream."

It was a royal order; it was a great royal compliment. It was a different thing from the talks in the prison, with companions, servants like himself, upon the surface meanings of their sleeping fancies. It meant for Joseph the assumption of grave office and responsibility; the declaring of something which should affect a kingdom, and disclose Almighty counsel.

"It is not in *me*," he said simply. "*God* shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

And then Pharaoh told the young Hebrew his two dreams; of the fat kine and the lean kine by the river, and again of the full ears in the corn and the ears blasted with the east wind; and the lean kine and the thin ears de-

vouring the fat kine and the full ears ; and that none of his wise men could declare the portent to him.

“God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do,” was the answer of the son of Israel. And after he had expounded the dreams as one, and their meaning as of the time of plenty and the time of famine in the land, he said again, as he had began, “What *God* is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.” — “And for that,” he repeats, “the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice ; because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.”

Then he counseled the king ; and with such simple wisdom, that he and all his servants about him saw that the judgment was clear and good. And to question of “a man discreet and wise” to carry out the counsel, —

“Can we find,” said Pharaoh to his court, “such a one as this, in whom the Spirit of God is ?”

The faith of the Hebrew was of quickening power ; it conveyed itself into the soul of the king ; for at least that moment, he saw the depth open, and the light stream from beyond all enveiling sign.

And he made Joseph his ruler and purveyor over his people.

So it all came to pass, as the word had been said ; and God was with Joseph in the land of Egypt ; and the Egyptians were fed through the time of famine, "and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn ; because that the famine was sore in all lands."

We know well how Jacob heard of this corn in Egypt, and sent down his sons from Canaan to buy ; and how Joseph dealt with them, and hid himself from them for a while, watching, questioning, testing them ; demanding that they should bring to him their youngest brother, — his very own brother, — Benjamin ; and how remorse stirred suddenly in their hearts for their old sin, and they said among themselves in the presence of the stern ruler, " We are guilty concerning our brother. We saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us."

And Reuben answered bitterly, " Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ; and ye would not hear ? Therefore, behold, also his blood is required."

It was as the day of judgment to these sons of Israel. It was the day of their purifying repentance, and their restoration.

They spoke in their own tongue, and knew not that the ruler understood ; but Joseph, hearing every word, turned away his face and wept. It was like the pity of the Lord, who knows all we say to ourselves in our self-condemnation.

He had told them, in offering his conditions, "This do, and live ; for *I fear God.*" And even that — his acknowledgment of their God, the God of Israel — had not made him known to them.

So Joseph took Simeon as hostage, and "bound him before their eyes," and let the others go, with their sacks full upon their laden asses, and their money secretly returned to them, each man's in the mouth of his sack.

One of them, opening his sack by the way, found it. "My money is restored !" he cried. And their very hearts failed them, overwhelmed by such strange nobility of treatment where they had deserved nothing, and afraid of what the gift might mean.

"What hath God done unto us ?" they exclaimed. "Is it his great good, or somehow his visitation for our great evil ?"

And they came to their father Israel, with their wonderful, troubled story ; and they emptied their sacks before him ; “and behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack.”

All given back, — the gracious sign ! And yet they were all afraid ; they could not understand the full mercy.

And Jacob mourned.

They had this yet to bear. They had to hear him say, in his old, tremulous, grieving accents, “Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not ; and Simeon is not ; and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.”

Then Reuben, the firstborn, the “beginning of his strength,” — the truest in these matters of all the brethren, — offered his two sons as pledges. “Slay them,” he said, “if I bring him not to thee. Deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.” But Israel still refused.

Famine again ; and sore in the land.

The corn brought from Egypt exhausted ; and Jacob saying once more to his sons, “Go again, and buy us a little food.”

Judah remonstrated. "We may not go," he said, "except we take our brother. The man did solemnly protest unto us."

"Why told ye him ye had another brother?"

"He asked us straitly."

"Send the lad with me," said Judah, — he who should be the sceptre-bearer ; — "I will be surety for him."

And their father Israel said, "Then do this : carry the man a present : take of the best fruits of the land ; balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, almonds. Take double money ; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks carry again ; peradventure it was an oversight. Take — also " — we may imagine with what struggle this last concession came — "*your brother*," — the very heart of me. "Go again unto the man ; and God Almighty give you mercy before the man !"

They did all as their father had said. They came down into Egypt, with their gifts, and their money, for payment and repayment, *and Benjamin*.

With a trembling anxiety they met the steward of Joseph's house, whom the gover-

nor sent out to them; and they told him the whole story.

"We came honestly to buy food," they said; "and when we opened our sacks, behold, every man's money in the mouth of his sack. We have brought it again, and we have brought other money. We want food. We cannot tell who put the money in our sacks."

And the steward, to their glad astonishment, answered, "Peace be to you; fear not; your God, the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money."

This man was an Egyptian; a worshiper of Osiris and of Ashteroth; yet he had honor in his heart, like Pharaoh, for the gods of other men. Surely neither he, nor his king, was so far, after all, from the kingdom of heaven that is within all. And they had among them, in their very midst of confidence and honor, the leaven of the life of Joseph.

The steward brought out Simeon to them; safe, and well entreated. He gave them water for their refreshment, and provender for their beasts; and bade them make ready to eat bread with Joseph at the noontide meal.

When Joseph came, and — their gifts in their hands — they “bowed themselves to the earth,” the great officer of the king seems scarcely to have seen the offering, or heeded much the salutation, literal fulfillment though it was of his own old boyhood’s dream. He asked them simply of their welfare, and then allowed the longing of his heart to utter itself in the carefully restrained question, “Your father? The old man of whom ye spake, — is he well, and yet alive?”

“And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health; he is yet alive.” And again “they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.”

He lifted up his eyes upon Benjamin.

“Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? — God be gracious unto thee, my son!”

And then, with his great love surging in his heart, he had to “make haste,” and he retreated into his chamber, and wept there.

But he “washed his face,” and still “restrained himself,” and went out, and said, “Set on bread.” And they ate, at their separate tables; Joseph by himself, as state demanded; the brethren by themselves, and the

Egyptians by themselves ; for they might not eat with Hebrews. And they ate and drank, and were all merry.

And still Joseph refrained, and tried them again. In love, as God tries ; to bring out the truest and best that was in them.

The sacks were filled ; the money was put again in the mouths of the sacks ; and in Benjamin's sack the governor's silver cup, out of which he drank, and divined.

And then, when they were a little way out of the city, the steward was sent after them.

"Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?" was his stern demand. "Is not this the cup in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he divineth? Ye have done evil."

He spoke as to guilty men. He explained nothing.

But the men in their truth spoke proudly.

"Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid we should do this! Did we not bring back all the money? Wherefore then should we steal?"

And they took down every man his sack to the ground ; and opened them for searching.

"And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack."

They were all brought back to Joseph's house.

And Joseph charged them with the deed, asking them how it was that they had done it.

"Wot ye not," he said, "that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

And Judah saw how the old iniquity — "the iniquity of their heels," — of their past — had "compassed them about;" and he said, in the depth of his contrition, "How shall we clear ourselves?" We are not clear; if of this thing, we are not clear of the other, that has been; "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

And Joseph said, "God forbid; the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant. As for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

Then Judah came near unto him, and entreated.

He told the whole long, sad, touching story; of their father, the old man, and the son of

his old age; all that was left to him of the wife of his youth's love, Rachel; that the other of the two she bare him had perished; that "his life was bound up in the lad's life;" that to go back without Benjamin would be to take his father's life; that he, Judah, would stay, and be a bondman, for he was surety for the boy; but that he could not go up without the lad unto his father.

Then Joseph sent away all his Egyptian servants and guards, and stood alone among his brethren, and declared himself to them, and no longer refrained himself, but laid by his dignity, and wept aloud.

"I am Joseph. *Doth my father yet live?*" he cried.

And not a man could answer; for they were dismayed, and "troubled at his presence."

It was like a meeting in the life beyond with him whom they had injured and slain.

And as one, loving and forgiving in the Life Beyond, might do, did Joseph.

"Come near to me, I pray you," he said. And then they did come near.

"I am Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt. Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that

ye sold me hither." I am not angry. "*God did send me before you to preserve life.*"

Is it not so they go before us toward whom we have failed, whom in our ignorance and folly and unkindness we have injured, to forgive and to make a place,—to be as Christs for us before God?

"God sent me before you to preserve you, . . . and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

Is there not this great comfort also laid up for us in the story of Joseph?

"God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me: tarry not: haste, and bring down my father hither. Tell him of all my glory in Egypt. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen: you shall be near to me; I will nourish you. Ye shall belong in the land, and grow here."

"And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck."

They were like the last tears, that may even be shed in the first hours of heaven; before God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces.

"Moreover, he kissed all his brethren."

No old wrong was remembered. It was all God's right. They were to rejoice together.

So Israel came down into Egypt, and the last long sojourn was begun.

"Regard not your stuff; take wagons, to bring your father, and your wives, and your little ones; the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

Again, it was like the gathering of the kindreds together, to their home; the "place prepared," among the "many mansions."

And when Israel heard the word, and saw how his child, parted from him long years before, had sent for him and was waiting for him, "his spirit revived," and he said, "It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive."

"And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen; and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept a good while."

Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, taking five of his brethren with him.

Proud, doubtless, he was of these grand young men, five out of eleven, sons of Israel, sons of Abraham.

And how surely he relied upon the magnanimity of the king ! His people were shepherds ; and “ every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians ; ” yet Joseph had bidden them to declare their calling to Pharaoh, when he should ask it of them.

When the king put the question, therefore, “ What is your occupation ? ” they answered, “ We are shepherds ; we have come hither to sojourn, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. We pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” And Pharaoh turned to Joseph, saying only, “ *Thy father and thy brethren* are come unto thee : the land of Egypt is before thee ; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell ; and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.”

“ And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh.”

And Pharaoh inquired kindly of him ; of his age, seeing him so gentle and venerable.

And Jacob told him that his pilgrimage had been of a hundred and thirty years, yet the

days of his life had been few and evil, and had not attained unto the years of the life of his fathers. "Few and evil," — or insufficient, — do men count the years of their lives upon this earth, after all is done ; for they are not the "attaining;" they have been consumed in a hope and a striving, with many a delay and thwart. Because, the end is not yet.

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh."

And Joseph gave his father and his brethren a possession in the land of Rameses, the "best of the land;" but it lay to the eastward, that which was called the land of Goshen. It was not in the strict ancient boundary of Egypt, but a province. So the shepherd people were separate, in their domain, from the Egyptians.

There Israel gathered his sons about him, and gave them in his last days his inspired counsel and admonition, his prophetic word and characterization of each, and "yielded up his spirit," and was gathered unto his people.

After the death of Israel, his sons were again afraid.

"Peradventure Joseph will hate us now,

and requite us all the evil which we did unto him," they said. And they sent a messenger to entreat a fresh forgiveness, and his mercy. It is a harder and a longer thing for the sinner to forgive his own sin, than for the sin to be forgiven. The evil that has been in him keeps him slow to believe in the everlasting good. He wants the seventy times seven assurance. And God has given it in the seventy times seven command.

Once again did Joseph speak the plain, strong word. "Fear not: am I in the place of God?" he told them. "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive."

It was God's forgiveness; God's taking up and making right; the forgiveness of man was the included thing.

"Now therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones." And he comforted them, and spake kindly to them.

"And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years; he saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children of the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees."

God is good unto the *kindreds*; he saves his people in their *families*. Every man shall have his own, and shall dwell among them. This was the gospel to the patriarchs.

“And Joseph said at last unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware unto Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob. God will surely visit you,” he repeated; “and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.”

And he took an oath thereto from the children of Israel.

“So Joseph died, an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”

PART IV

THE EVENTS AND SIGNS OF THE EXODUS

CHAPTER I

THE ROD OF POWER

"GOD shall surely visit you," Joseph had declared to his people, in the clear-seeing of his dying hours.

It was centuries later, fewer or more as the chronologies have not been able definitely to determine, that the word came to Moses in Midian.

Born in Egypt, of a Hebrew mother, his life outlawed from before his birth, but saved, as Joseph's had been, by the will of God, — taken in gentle charge by the daughter of a Pharaoh, — he had grown to manhood, been educated, adopted wholly as an Egyptian.

Nevertheless, his time waited. The love of his own people was in him ; his birthright as a son of Israel remained. He walked between the races, mingling with the daily life of each, related though distinct.

The Hebrew shepherds had been degraded into slavery. Over them were the hard Egyptian taskmasters. A cruelty of one of these upon a countryman of his own, awakened the righteous wrath of kindred, to defense and retribution. Moses slew the Egyptian, and escaped into Midian.

For forty years he lived there, in the wilderness, an Arabian. He served Jethro, an Arabian shepherd, and took his daughter for wife.

Out of Midian, after the forty years, he was to return into Egypt, called and sent of God, and bearing from Him the rod of a divine authority.

A *rod* is a sign — it is also a conveyance — of Power. It is the kingly sign, — the sceptre. It is the sign of a finding, a discerning power; the power of discovery, which is the descent of a thought-power through a man's brain, and even to his very fingers, whereby hidden knowledges are laid hold of, secret treasures and springs of water brought to light and use, and wonderful mechanisms adapted and informed. The divining rod, — the magician's and the sibyl's and the fairy's wand; — are symbols as old as human imagi-

nation and belief. And there is a reality in them. There is always a conducting line for the living force. There is a rod for the lightning. There is a possible grasp and bringing down of the Unseen Might into human affairs. There is a trolley-beam that reaches up and lays hold of the great vital currents of creation, and draws thence what it wants for the work, the act, of the hour. There is a faith that puts its hand in God's, and through which God's hand works the wonders that it will. Life is fast shaping itself, though half blindly, and with many a misapplication, presumption, and blunder, to this marvelous relation. The man who stands upon a car-platform and holds the motor is in direct touch with the Divine. Here and there, possibly, one thinks of it. Each one, maybe, in his obscure sense of the mystery of it, feels more than he puts into conscious thought. If men could keep continual recognition of it, in every grasp they have of any life-force, — every human being would be strong with the immediate strength of the Most High. Every soul would be a Moses. The time is coming. Here and there it has come. "Lay hold of My Strength," saith the Lord. And a Saint Paul cries out

exultingly, "I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christian Science is as old as the Book of Exodus. Moses learned the alphabet of it away out there in Midian.

Leading his father-in-law's flocks over the far part of the desert to find pasture, he came to the mountain of God.

The Great Presence—the awful Might—was there before him, in the inaccessible heights, the tremendous overshadowing majesty, of Horeb.

At the mountain foot, close to the desert sands, grew a living thing; a bush. On the edge of desolation, life began again; and the light of life shone forth from the growing herb to the opened sight of Moses. It was a sudden revelation. He beheld it straightway to its heart as the Life of God making itself food for the life of beasts and men. The glory of heaven shone through the little plant; it was all aflame with that which blazes in sun and star; it was Present Deity. "The angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses out of the midst of the bush."

So vivid was it that his very bodily senses took part in the perception. How was he to

distinguish between that which came through ordinary channel of outward impression and that way reached his inner knowledge every day, and this, given direct from the within to the within, yet to whose intimate touch and thrill the external chords vibrated in answer to the same reality they were attuned to for carrying its word from world to spirit?

It even seemed to him as wholly a wonder of sensation ; a thing to be investigated on the material plane. He would have come close to it with common touch and literal beholding ; he would have sought to penetrate — as men keep trying still to do — to the great why of a fact from the outside ; to learn the because of a glory opened forth to him from a common growth, with test of eyesight and of fingers' ends ; to probe with handling the secret of the incarnation of a power that burned in splendor of fire and did not consume.

But the voice of God called to him, — and again his senses seemed to bring the word, — “ Put thy shoes from off thy feet ; ” stop thine outward approach ; try not to search that way, and to explain. Be content that the glory is shown thee ; there is no need to strive to come

nearer or to know more ; be still where thou art ; “the place *whereon thou standest* is holy ground.” It is *I*, saith the Lord, that come to thee !

And possessed with the sublime fear which was of the enfolding of Almightyness, Moses stood still, and hid his face, — shut out his bodily senses, — and listened.

And the Voice said, “I am the God of thy father. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. I have heard the cry of my people, and I am come down to deliver them. I will deliver them by thee. I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

“What am I,” cries Moses, “that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the children of Israel forth ?”

“*I* will be with thee,” was the answer ; “*I* have sent thee. Thou shalt bring them forth, and ye shall serve me upon this mountain.” They shall learn my visible Presence, and my leading, as thou art learning. I will show myself to them also in the things that I have made, and in the ways by which I shall guide them.

"But if they ask me the name of this God of their fathers, what shall I answer them?"

In the midst of the awe and the glory, the sense was upon him of his utter incapacity to transfer the vision; to repeat the heavenly word; to prove the revelation to the dulled and darkened souls of the people who had been Egyptian slaves, — makers of bricks, — so long.

"Say unto them," answered the awful Voice, "*I AM* hath sent me unto you."

The God who is; the Be-ing; the Power in all things by which all things are; that which you can neither find nor name, the Hidden Life. That which all souls question, search for; behold, they need not search, they need not question. Before they can ask, they have felt Me: the very ground they stand on is holy with Me!

This was the great manifestation; the errand; the message. Then, surging through the man's thought, quickened divinely, came the plan, the instruction.

Gather the elders of Israel together; say to them, The Lord God of your fathers has appeared unto me. Tell them of the great Promise: "I have surely visited you; and I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey. I will do wonders in the land of Egypt; and after that, the king will let you go."

Suppose there did intrude and mingle with the absolute, pure Word, a swift calculation of the man's own mind for ways and means? Suppose the device did suggest itself of "spoiling the Egyptians," — of not going away empty? Is it not easy to detach and distinguish this from the grand, full command and promise, "Certainly I will be with thee; I will care for thee;" and from the true believing which was ready to receive, to rely, and to obey? Can we point to any human leadership or action where faith and obedience have rested utterly upon the Lord, and where no small anxiety has sought to provide and contrive as of itself?

The Bible story is a human story. The Divine is in it; but humanity has never yet, except in the One Only-Begotten, surrendered itself wholly, to very identification with the

Divine. That was to come; the Old Testament was leading to the New; the New is leading now to the final coming of the Son of Man in the glory of the Father, — the lifting up of the race into the life with God, — the “bringing in of everlasting righteousness.”

Moses had found the Presence of God. To be in the presence of God is to receive power.

The Lord said to Moses, “What is that in thine hand?”

Already in his grasp, and he knew it not. “Only a rod.”

“Cast it on the ground.”

Moses cast it on the ground before the Lord, and it became a living thing, — a quivering, coiling, swift-gliding serpent. Something instinct, and quick from end to end, with writhing, palpitating force.

That is thy rod! “Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail.”

“And Moses put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand;” waiting for his command and use.

Doubtless there was a flash of wondering pride through the man’s mind, that he held the amazing thing; that to his word or act it

would answer ; that his touch controlled it. Do we have no such wondering of self-glory now ?

“Put thy hand into thy bosom.” Take to thyself, if thou wilt, the marvel, the achievement, the possible of power. Through thy hand a miracle has been done : fold that hand, with the sense of its potency in it, behind the swelling pride of thine own personality.

Moses “put his hand into his bosom ; when he took it out, it was leprous as snow.”

“Put thine hand into thy bosom again.”

Take to thyself now thy rebuke, thy punishment.

And when Moses meekly obeyed the second bidding, and plucked forth his hand a second time, lo, it was *again as his other flesh*. No different ; no better ; only mortal flesh, as the rod was a common rod. But it was clean, and sound, and ready for God’s service ; and with God was the wonder, and the power, and the glory.

CHAPTER II

THE GIVING OF THE GREAT NAME

GOD had bidden Moses to say to the children of Israel, "It is the *I Am* who hath sent me to you. The Be-ing, — the Almighty One."

Afterward, when Moses had begun his errand, and made his first appeal to Pharaoh for the Hebrews in the name of the Lord God, — when he had met only with contempt, and the king had said, "I know nothing of your Lord God, neither will I let this people go;" when through his taskmasters Pharaoh had put yet heavier and impossible burdens upon the Israelites, so that they made mutinous accusation on their own part against Moses and Aaron, declaring that they had deceived with false promises only to make the condition of the people worse; when Moses came in discouragement to the Lord, and demanded, as ignorant, half-believing human hearts do always demand in their sore trou-

bles, — “*Wherefore?*” “Why is it that thou hast so entreated us? Why is it that thou hast sent me to do that which is impossible?” — then the Lord in his majesty answered to the soul of Moses, “Thou shalt see what I will do! I am the Lord. I am the Almighty God, who appeared to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and by that name I was known to them. Now I will make myself known to you, and to my people, by my Name *Jehovah*. I will bring you out from your burdens and bondage; I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and I will take you to me for a people, and ye shall know that I am the *Lord, your God*. I *am* the Lord.”

It was a new and further revelation. It became a new, and larger, and closer believing in the soul of Moses.

Jehovah was the Person of the Divine; the Lord of the Human; related in all points to the humanity He had made, in his own Infinite Humanity. The *Jehovah*-Angel was the personal, intimate, visiting, abiding Presence of God with men; the Emmanuel, the God-manifest. *Jehovah* was the “separate Name”

of God ; known only — as is the name He gives to each soul of his redeemed to call it by — to “ them who have received it.”

It was by this Name that Moses, and the Hebrew people, henceforth believed in God. It held the whole mystery of Being and Divineness. In it was the Covenant with the created. It was a sacred thing : they dared not use it on their lips, but only in their secret hearts. Openly, devoutly, lovingly, they called Him *Lord* ; apprehending now a new meaning in the name *Lord God*, and learning for the first time how that great, dear meaning was enshrined in the syllables interpreted to Moses beyond the early understanding of their fathers. It was the awful, beautiful significance that had come to them ; it was the *knowledge by the name*, not the mere calling by it, which indeed the first sons of Adam had been taught, beforehand of the full interpretation. “ By my name *Jehovah* was I not *known* unto them,” said the Lord.

The opening of new knowledges follows always the simple, first, believing acceptations. It is the law of Revelation. The word — the sign — is given men first ; afterward, the full understanding.

We have no right to discuss, to doubt, to pronounce upon, the deep things of the Kingdom, till we have received its first elements as little children. A page of Greek will remain forever unintelligible to him who has not learned first the alphabet of the characters in which it is written.

The belief of believers is at once the key and the assurance of faith. "To him that hath" — even the smallest beginning, as a grain of mustard seed — "shall more be given; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." That which he hath is not a vital seed; it is a husk only, and the wind shall blow it away.

There is a holding of the seed of truth in a mystery; a waiting for its unfolding; a watching for the command of how to deal with it; a reverent fulfilling of conditions, in the confidence of something that shall grow. There is a contemptuous tearing to pieces, and scattering, of that which safely — even blindly — envelops it, and a casting away of what to our ignorance seems hard and uselessly hidden, but which has in it the very nucleus and miracle of life.

To Abraham—to Moses—to the Hebrew people—were intrusted the beginnings; the alphabet, the first syllables, of heavenly language; the object-illustrations of eternal and infinite Fact. With all their misconstructions of Divine Will, with all their low and limited appropriations, with all their disobediences and rebellions and apostasies, they still, as a nation, held fast to the first tokens and commandments; kept the first ordinances; believed in the foundation law, and looked for the Promise. It was their work in the line of the ages; their sacred commission upon the earth. Among them were always a few high witnesses, a few Seers of the Truth beyond the ordinance.

These were the "Israelites;" by whose name Paul appealed, sixteen centuries after, to his people of that day, "stumbling at the old stumbling stone" of the mere law, and refusing the New Jehovah-Revelation of "the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"I could wish *myself* under ban from Christ," he cries with passion of desire in their behalf, "for my brethren, for my kinsmen; who are *Israelites*; of the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the

giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever ! ”

“ Not as if the word of God hath taken none effect,” he adds, with his great Gospel cheer and trust. “ For they are not all Israel, — not all children, — who are of Israel, and the seed of Abraham. The children of the flesh are not the children of God ; but the *Children of the Promise* are counted for the seed.”

“ Many are called ; few are chosen,” declared the Lord himself.

Yet “ there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few,” said the Joshua of the Old Testimony ; and the Christ of the New chose but twelve, to send out with his word into all the world.

CHAPTER III

THE LORD'S PASSOVER

LIFE offered is life redeemed.

Life is of me, saith the Lord ; and life is mine. Give it back to me, and I will save it. Render it up in sacrifice, and I will redeem it.

This is the sign of the slain lamb, of the blood upon the doorposts of man's going out and coming in ; and of the Lord, holding judgment in his hand, passing by in mercy.

It would have been just as true for the Egyptian as for the Israelite ; but through the Israelite the gospel of it was given to the world.

"Eat of the passover, shod, with thy staff in thy hand ;" ready, instantly, to follow the Lord's bidding.

It is a double passing-over ; it is man's pass-over to God's side, renouncing his bondage to Egypt, and standing shod and ready to follow and serve the Lord ; it is God's Pass-over of Redemption, putting by repented evils

and old, sinful, slothful worldly servitude, and beginning with his child a new leading into peace and safety and freedom. Henceforth, every step is to be out of the strange land toward the Home Land, the Land of Promise.

The moment a life turns to God, and facing about upon itself abjures its old wrong, condemning it in the conscience of God's truth, that instant and thenceforward the whole might of God is for mercy ; *against the sin* — to destroy and blot it out and make it as though it had never been, as to the life out of which it is cast, but only a knowledge gained *against* such evil forever ; and, *for the repenting child*, to undo, and prevent, and pass over, the offense, estrangement, penalty. "All things" begin to "work together for good, to them who" begin to "love God, who are the called according to his purpose."

This, and nothing else, or short of it, is Salvation.

The gospel is hidden in the first Paschal service, — the first shielding and sparing in the midst of judgment, according to open condition and covenant.

There was wrong and sin in the dwellings of the Israelites, as well as of the Egyptians ; but

the dealing with the one was different from the dealing with the other, as the attitude and relation of the two peoples was different with the Lord himself. To bring Egypt to the right, and to the knowledge and confession of heavenly truth, it was still needful that penalty—which is Divine Teaching of immutable truth—should have its continued work. Egypt would come no other way. But the moment a people, or a soul, surrenders wholly to the Eternal Righteousness, that moment the Eternal Righteousness imputes itself to the returning prodigal, and Eternal Love works altogether in his behalf. The remission of sin begins.

The Passover, indeed, has to be eaten with “bitter herbs,” and with bread from which the old leaven has been utterly rejected. Repentance,—a new life,—only with these is given the absolution.

Law, which they did not recognize or confess as God's, had its wonderful way with the Egyptians. There befell them what we call a “strange poetical justice ;” but a justice which is shaped in the eternal nature and trend of things and deed ; of spiritual force set in action by ill or good in spirit, act, life,

— by obedience or transgression of inmost truth and good ; and which takes its form, far more often than we perceive or trace, after the very likeness, and in the selfsame relation with, the sin.

The Egyptians had sought to keep the Hebrews in slavery ; and lest they should grow too strong, they had ordered that every man child of Israel should be slain at its birth.

The Lord God would have both Hebrews and Egyptians in allegiance — not in slavery, but in the “liberty of the truth” — to himself ; and lest they should grow too strong against their own best life, by transmission and perpetuation of evil, there came upon the evil nation, in the order of His Providence, which handles all causes and events, the smiting of its own firstborn. Undoubtedly, the firstborn *sons* ; “from the firstborn of Pharaoh upon the throne to the firstborn of the maid servant behind the mill, and the captive in the dungeon ; and all the firstborn of beasts and cattle.” Truly saith the Lord God, “Ye shall sanctify to me *every* firstborn creature ; it is mine.” And if his own be not given to Him, his might can claim it.

“Ye shall set apart unto the Lord every

firstling of a beast ; ” and “ all the firstborn of man shalt thou redeem ” with sacrifice.

The first is God's : with everything ye shall “ seek first his kingdom and righteousness ; ” only so *can* He, in his own best, everlasting way, add everything unto you.

The first love, — the first service, — the chief joy, — the chief possession : *in themselves*, in their *wholeness*, in all that they are to men, they are to be continually rendered up. In the consciousness that they are of God, — in the very joy, in the very using, — they are to be a holy sacrifice ; so only can they be joy, or use, at all ; for they are of God already, and it is his purpose, his gladness, that comes to man by them. To recognize this, is to *receive*, in fullness ; to render up, is to have rendered back “ a thousandfold, even in this present time ; and in the world to come ” to have “ life everlasting.”

The sign was in the altar sacrifice ; the “ whole burnt-offering,” carried up, in the flame of love, to the Love from whence it came. The beautiful reality is in the whole heavenly life of them who forever, without pain or loss, shall “ walk before Him in the light of the living.”

Now and again, God reaches forth his hand and takes back his own ; not in anger, not eternally, but that man may know ; may follow his desire, and find it safe with the Father ; may learn to say " It is the Lord who taketh away, as it was He who gave ; yes, as it is He who shall give again. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Judgment is not revenge ; it is a justifying ; a *setting right*. " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " " The Lord shall judge *his people*." " Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance ? (I speak as a man) " saith Saint Paul ; " God forbid : for then how shall God judge " (set right) " the world ? "

" Judgment " and " vengeance " have been sorely misinterpreted through human limit : divinely, widely, in the whole and at last, they mean " adjustment," — " vindication."

Man's vengeance is a " getting equal " with his fellow, in an injury. God's vengeance is the conquering of wrong with right. " Is not *my* way equal ? Is not *your* way unequal ? " saith the Lord.

The same thing was in the Plague and in the Passover ; it was the compelling and the leading ; always from evil, and toward the

good. God's hand, by the hand of Moses, dealt mightily with Egypt and with Israel ; it was to one end with all.

The *Law* of the Divine Ordering came by Moses : the grace and truth of it have come by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPOILING OF THE EGYPTIANS

It was a rude justice that inspired Moses to tell the people, upon the eve of their flight, to borrow of their Egyptian neighbors their "jewels of gold and jewels of silver." Perhaps what Moses was able to believe in at this time was *only* stern force, relentless retribution; what was behind these he felt only dimly; the Will of God was grand, awful, resistless; the justice of God was against the evil-doers, in all things. But in the later light, we may surely see deeper, and recognize blessed meanings which, after all, were at the heart of Moses' convictions, — his certainty of the "Thus saith the Lord," which justified his own commands.

The wisdom of the kingdom is uttered in strange parables, which it is only given to them who enter into the mysteries to understand.

Christ told the story of the unjust steward, who cheated his lord in befriending his

fellows ; and he declared that the lord commended his unjust steward, *in that* he had done wisely *in his generation* ; as far as he had the nature to do, — as far as he had — yet — been born into doing.

And Jesus added his own command, which has perplexed many : “ And I say unto *you*, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

Following instantly upon this word comes the seeming contradiction : “ He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much. If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches ? ”

The only reconciling is the “ good out of evil ” which we are bidden to find and to make sure of. Make to yourselves opportunities for the righteousness of heaven out of the unrighteousness of earth. In the very things of self which men strive for to possess separately, discover the means and implements for your work of brotherly love, — your service to the neighbor. The unjust steward, — *according to his light*, — acted for the largest benefit of his fellows. *According to your*

light, and within the ordering of God and His Commandment, do ye likewise. For so you build for yourselves the everlasting habitations; even the "habitation of God through the Spirit."

Carry out with you into every larger, better phase of life, the best things — the lasting things — the really precious and beautiful things — of the life that has been.

Even among the Egyptians, ye may gather jewels of silver and jewels of gold. They have robbed you; ye have suffered their oppressions; but something ye may make them render back. Something lovely, — something of imperishable value, — they will have given into your hands. It is yours; bear it away with you; it is the result of old labor, old endurance, old uncompensations.

Out of the stress and deprivation and struggle of this life, we shall bear away its best, in concentrated worth and resplendence, to shine in our glad possession forever. It is the spoil of the Egyptians.

Underneath the act which the Israelites committed, and which Moses sanctioned, but which as an outward act we condemn, lay this meaning, justification, promise. It was an

unuttered sense of this that impelled Moses ; we may receive and rejoice in it, while we discern and refuse for ourselves the outward wrong, the forcible or crafty righting of ourselves in outward things ; while we apprehend and obey the Christian precept, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Avenge not yourselves : I will repay, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER V

THE CLOUD AND THE FIRE

IN the strength of the faith of Moses and Aaron, the Children of Israel took their way into the wilderness. "*They took their journey,*" the text says ; but directly after it declares, "*The Lord went before them to lead them the way:* by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire." He gave them guidance, shielding, light.

For forty years of day and night, the wilderness was to be their world. A whole generation was to pass away, a whole generation to be born and grow, while they traveled. A whole story of life was to be enacted in that desert tract of country, where, nevertheless, the Lord would lead and feed them, give them bread to eat and water to drink, and show them all their way. All their way from Egypt to Canaan ; from servitude and sorrow to freedom, and the beautiful, plentiful Land of God.

He himself went before them. He himself, in the cloud of a gracious mystery, in the glow and glory of his Presence. He veiled himself, sparing them the too awful and continual blaze of Deity ; he lifted up light upon them when they needed it in the heavy darkness. He gave himself to them in as much and in as near as they could bear.

Their "Spiritual Rock followed them ;" accompanied with them. "And that Rock was Christ." God was already in the world in his Christhood ; in his close abiding and sharing with men.

And this was the Believing of Moses, and his leading of the Children of Israel.

Whatever the external sign of it was, the Presence never left them. "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

"For he said, Surely they are my people : . . . so he was their Saviour. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his Presence saved them : in his love and in his pity he redeemed them."

Look unto the Lord. That was the lesson, and the comfort, the strength, and the peace, and the assurance of the wilderness. Is there

any other, now or ever, in the wilderness of mortal living and earthly journeying?

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.”

“Look unto the Rock whence ye are hewn.”

“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies’ sake;” . . . “that I may walk before God in the light of the living.”

“Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your” own “fire, and the sparks that ye have kindled. . . . Ye shall lie down in sorrow.”

“Oh that I were as in the days when God preserved me: when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked in darkness.”

“O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.”

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.”

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“Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

“I am the Light of the World; he that abideth in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

“The Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

“The city had no need of the sun, . . . for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Jesus — Christ. The Cloud of the human, — the Glory of the Divine.

The Word made flesh, that it might dwell among us: the Glory of the Only Begotten, moving before the world, to lead it through its night-time to the Everlasting Day.

Moses, David, Isaiah, Job in his lament; every prophet and teacher and believer of the truth, through the whole Bible Record, to the Christ Visible himself, and the apostles who

walked with him in the earthly, and saw the visions of the Heavenly in his Transfiguration, his Glorification, and the open splendors of his New Jerusalem, — tell us the same thing, — of the Shadow and the Shining, — the Guiding and Abiding, — which are the Presence of the Lord God.

“Come *near* before the Lord,” commanded Moses to the complaining people. “And behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.”

“I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.”

The Cloud and the Fire are one.

They are the Leading, Protecting, Showing, in the wilderness.

By faith of them Moses followed, and drew after him the hosts — even the rebellious, upbraiding, untrusting hosts — of the congregation of Israel.

The Cloud and the Fire are one.

There is a veiled, and there is an Immediate Presence.

In all natural things, in all natural circumstances, in the life and work of every *day*, God *limits* himself to us; He goes before us,

in a hidden majesty, to lead us the way. He covers himself, in his gift and providence, in his commandment, his teaching, his speaking with men, with the law and condition of the earthly. Even Moses, when he came forth from the Intimate Glory, to give the word of the Lord to the people, spoke to them "with a veil upon his face;" and he kept the veil upon his face until he went in to speak with the Lord again.

A beautiful veil was hung before the place of the Ark of the Testimony: it was "between the holy and the Most Holy place."

Christ came, and walked, in the earthly; "in the veil of his flesh;" to show men the way, through the earthly.

In the night-time, when the earthly was withdrawn, He came in the Fire of the Holy Ghost, and gave himself to his own.

In the every-day, the common, the rudimentary, God is in the Cloud, before us: in the hour and the power of the spirit, when it pauses and separates from the natural, and the natural is put away as into its own darkness, then the Lord comes with inner transcendent light into the very soul. Then He teaches, leads, speaks, straight from the

Divine, into the divine He has divided to us,
to be as ourselves.

“The Pillar of the Cloud went before the
people by day, to *lead them the way*; and the
Pillar of Fire by night, to *give them light*.”

The Pillar of the Cloud, and the Pillar of
the Fire, are One.

CHAPTER VI

THE RED SEA

THE Children of Israel, led by the Lord's command through Moses, went out into the Wilderness and encamped by the sea. And the Egyptians followed them, surrounded them, and hemmed them in.

More or less, the Israelites had been willing slaves in the land of Egypt. More or less, they were looking back, even now, upon such security, such comfort of the flesh and of indolent, irresponsible submission, as they had had in their bondage. Now, they had made enemies utterly, and to the death, of their old taskmasters. Their Past pursued them, as it pursues every soul that departs out of Egypt to follow the Lord to the land which He will provide. "Behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid."

Not yet had they come into the promised peace and safety. Not yet were they out of reach of their old miserableness. Their old

evils followed hard upon them, and would not let them go. "We would better have stayed!" they cried out to Moses. "We might as well have been content. We shall die here in the wilderness. The vengeance of the wicked is come upon us."

"Wait. Fear not. Stand still. Ye shall see the salvation of the Lord. The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." That was the grand word which Moses answered to their terrified souls.

It is the word of assurance against all the evil of men's past.

"Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward: lift up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

There shall be no hopelessness, no destruction or confounding, to them who believe in me, and follow after my command, whatsoever bondage or corruption they may have come out from, saith the Lord, in the word of this wonderful history. That which has enslaved and debased them may pursue them with con-

demnation, with threatening, with fear and shame ; but it shall not seize nor conquer them, nor follow them forever. Its power over them is gone ; I myself will beat it back.

“ I will get me honor upon the host of them.”

“ And the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them ; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel ; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these : so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

The Presence of the Lord is both before and behind ; it is between man and his past, when the past accuses and threatens him ; and that which he has forsaken for the Lord shall not overtake him to destroy him. The Lord himself will interpose between the old unrighteousness and the new purity ; He will be a cloud and a darkness to hide the hateful thing out of the better life ; to this it shall only be as a burning light and a shining mercy of admonition and forgiveness, to encourage and make plain and safe the going in the forward way. Through all night of doubt, through all gloom of dread and self-reproach,

it shall be both shield and assurance ; covering and manifestation.

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; over the deep waters that the people had to pass, and which had seemed to shut them back among their enemies : “and the Lord caused the *sea* to go back, by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry, and the waters divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground ; and the waters,” which had forbidden them and made them afraid, “were a wall unto them upon their right hand and on their left.”

And through the pillar of fire and cloud the Lord looked upon the Egyptians, and troubled them, and took off their chariot wheels ; and again he commanded Moses, Stretch out thine hands over the sea. And the sea returned to his strength, and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Beforehand, He gave them the great sign of the prophet Micah : “He will subdue our iniquities ; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

It was the same sign that Christ gave, when

He sent the devils out of the possessed men into the herd of swine, and the herd of swine into the sea to perish in the waters.

The evil thing shall perish; the bad past shall not follow and overcome. As soon as it is the past, and not any living, present part of us, the Lord can destroy it and save us alive. It is all He waits for.

“Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people believed the Lord, and his servant Moses.”

Believed, — what?

It was not the event, the doing, that called for act of faith. That had passed before their eyes. “They *saw* the great work; and they *believed* the Lord, and his servant Moses.”

It was not history, to them, to be questioned, sifted, caviled at; it was present fact, actual experience. In it, the Lord had been with them; they believed that. He had stood between them and their enemies; between their horrible past and their hoped-for future; they knew and believed that. He would be, in like manner, their Guide and their Defense forever. In that moment of exaltation, they

believed all this; and it remained with them strongly enough to be handed down, in a wonderful recital and creed, from generation to generation of their descendants.

And Moses and the Children of Israel sang together a great song of triumph:—

“I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation. . . .

“In the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee. . . .

“The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

“Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

It was the wind, the east wind; we are told to-day that “the miracle of the Red Sea has happened again.” A surveying officer of the British Government reports it as having occurred to his own observation. “A wind

arose so fierce that within a few hours it had driven the entire waters of Lake Menzahieh out of sight beyond the horizon, leaving all the sailing vessels resting on the sandy bed." "This," says the journal reporting Major-General Tulloch's statement, "answers to the description in the Bible; and the miracle turns out to be a phenomenon of nature."

Equally logical, and far truer, it would be to say, Every phenomenon of nature turns out to be a miracle of the will of God.

It was an east wind, the Mosaic story tells us, simply; but it was the Lord's wind, and held his purpose in it. That was the faith it taught Moses and the Israelites; that was what they believed about it. And it enabled them, looking forward with joy and certainty to God's further leading and salvation, to sing on:—

"Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation. . . . Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.

“The Lord shall reign for ever and ever!”

Verily, is not this the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, sung in the Revelation of all things by them who have gotten the victory, and stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, and who have in their hands the harps of God?

CHAPTER VII

THE HUNGER AND THIRST OF THE WILDERNESS

IN the joy of their deliverance, in the awe of the might of the Lord which had built up the sea of peril to be a wall of safety to them, and in it had cast to utter annihilation the evil power and threat and tyranny of their past, — in the strength of the Song of Moses, — the Israelites went on their way.

But they had yet to pass the wilderness. They had to learn to believe God in long delays, in weariness, and hunger, and thirst, and pain, as they had believed Him when with his sudden outstretched arm He had wrought visibly and mightily in their behalf. They had to come to the faith that in every little thing, — in their daily bread and the supply of water for their thirst, in strength for their march, in place and provision for their rest, in the very washing of their garments, — God's care and ordering were with them, his mean-

ings were spoken to their souls. It was to be a continual sacrament. So they were to be trained to feel Him, to lean upon Him, to follow Him, to listen to Him. By these things they were to "be ready" for the glorious and tremendous manifestations of Presence and Authority that in their hour should come. The rough and barren way through the desert of Sin (place of the cliffs) was to be trodden in dependence and trust, till in the majestic solitudes of Horeb they should come to the foot of its great peak of Sinai, from whose flame and smoke the Voice of Him should break forth whose silent guidance of light and cloud had been their sign and stay by night and day; whose word and answer to all their askings — even their murmurings and rebellions — had thus far been in gift, defense, satisfying; the meeting of their outward needs with instant helps. They had been cared for like little children, that they might be led up into the strength of manhood.

The Lord always "spake unto Moses" in the sense of his inner truth. "Say unto the children of Israel, . . . ye shall eat flesh, . . . ye shall be filled with bread; ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." When they

found the "small, round thing," left by the dew, lying "upon the face of the wilderness," and knew that they were to be saved from their hunger, they said, "It is — *What is it?*" For "manna" is of the words "mân hu," meaning just this question. "And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." In all things, "It is the Lord," was the lesson of their living. God never left Moses to his own struggles and devices, or to think that he was so left. He had said, "Surely I will be with thee;" and at every fresh need came the word, "*I* will do this for you." "*I* will rain bread from heaven for you." "*I* will stand before thee there, upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses believed the Lord, and the people believed Moses.

In the wilderness of the world to-day, — in the crowding and rushing of wonders, — the very gifts of God by his marvelous power, — where is Moses, to stand up and say of each successive revelation and benefit, "Behold, this is given to you by the Lord your God;" it is He who calls forth for you the hidden

secrets of the earth, and the life of it, for your strength and using? And where is the people, in whatever material dullness yet held and hindered, to confess and give praise at each new finding, and to "lay up before the Lord" a sacred reserve and memorial, "to be kept for their generations?"

Whatever the blindness, the forgetfulness, the time-serving, the self-seeking, of the Hebrew children, they were yet as children in their hearts, learning the faith of the Lord.

Faith was the one thing God was determined to give them; it was the one thing insisted on; it was the one thing in which failure, recusance, apostasy, was not tolerated; was not pardoned, till bitterly atoned for.

In the further experience of their pilgrimage, after they left Mount Sinai, we have example and record of this, to which we shall come in due order. But first, intermediate between their early leadings and disciplines and the graver tests of their believings and obedience, with the fearful judgments of their presumptions and disloyalties, we pause, as they did, before the Mountain of Manifestation, the place of the utterance of the Law, — the commands for their common living, — delivered

out of heights inaccessible, that burned with lightnings and sounded with great thunders.

In this Giving of the Law, see also the everlasting significances.

The "Thou shalt" of the obligations between man and God, and the "Thou shalt not" of things forbidden between men and men, are the orders of continual, lowly, primitive observance: they do not reveal, nor foretell; they are simply and uncompromisingly, Do, — and Do Not: but they are spoken down into our earthly plan and condition out of the everlasting Majesties and the ineffable Awfulness; out of the Being and Law of God himself, and his own Action: they are tremendous with issues which Almightyness itself acknowledges, and towards whose truth and justice it rules itself.

And yet, — mark where it is put, in the middle of the Decalogue, — in the heart of the law stands the "one commandment with promise;" the one gently given, as touching human hearts; it alone has no "shall" nor "shall not;" it appeals to our affections, — our love of kindred, land, *home*; it alone does foretell, and offer motive, — the "days long in the land," and with our own; it is the beginning of the law of our dearest life, — it

is the link between our worship of God and our just relation with our fellow men ; it has the statutes for the one on the one side, and for the other on the other ; it is the lovely clasp that holds our spiritual and our earthly together ; it is, as it were, the "Lamb in the midst of the Throne." This, also, because of the deep and infinite Law of God's own Nature.

"In the third month . . . they were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness ; and Israel camped before the mount : and Moses went up unto God."

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOUNTAIN

A MOUNTAIN is a high place. It is the lifting up of something of the earth toward the heaven. The heaven comes down and broods upon the mountain ; in clouds, in light and glory ; with awful stillness, and with awful voices. The thunder and the avalanche are there, — the great Rest, and Strength, and Peace are there also. They who walk in spiritual high places feel the call and the help of the hills. It is natural to climb into them ; to carry thought and seeking into their great altitudes and deep solitudes. The prophets found the presence of God in the mountains ; they prophesied of the coming of the Lord and his dwelling with his people, as to be upon the mountains ; “in his holy mountain,” where He would “bring” his people, and “make them joyful in his house of prayer.”

Christ spoke the word of Life first from a mountain ; he watched and prayed in a

mountain-top ; he was transfigured upon a mountain ; he met his chosen, after his resurrection, upon a mountain of Galilee. He led them out, at last, "as far as Bethany," on the farther slope of the Mount of Olives, to say his last words to them, to lift up his hands upon them with his blessing, and "while he blessed them" to be "parted from them and carried up into heaven." The mountains of the earth reach very near the unseen heights of the celestial.

"The Lord called unto Moses out of the mountain" of Sinai. He spoke to him there the things that he should tell the people. It was the handing down of faith — of sure believing — through the heart and mind and by the speech of a man filled with his own believing by the instant utterance of God, — to the acceptance of the men who waited far below ; who could not bear the thunders of God's speaking, nor the lightnings of his Presence. And how was it that this belief conveyed itself so absolutely, so unquestioned, to the minds of the dull, fearful, obstinate Israelites ? Why did not they begin to say, "How do *we* know this thing ? How shall we receive it, hearing it only from this man

Moses?" Why was it left for a people ages onward, between whom and this first one leader and believer stretches all the line of teachers, apostles, prophets of both Old and New Testimonies, to demur, and ask in a proud unsatisfaction, "Where is the proof of these old say-sos?"

The Children of Israel had begun to believe in a God already manifest in their own lives. They had learned this alphabet of faith; they had spelled some syllables of heavenly language that sets signs in the things of earth. They were ready for further message in the same speech. They *knew* what had been done for them by the hand of God, strengthening with a more than mortal might the hand of Moses. They knew, even in their limit and ignorance, what was only man-mighty, and what was God-Almighty. They felt the power of the Holy Ghost, though the Holy Ghost had not been named to them by that Name. *It is the sin against the Holy Ghost* that condemns — so long as they are in it — the unbelievers of this generation.

"Ye have seen," said the Lord, "*what I did*. . . . And how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." Now

I will give you plain commandment, for these lives of yours in which you know me. "And if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant," — keep and cherish this faith and knowledge of my meeting and abiding with you in the life of your soul and body, — "ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me. All the earth is mine; ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

And Moses came and told these words of God to the people; and all the people answered together, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with *thee*, and believe *thee* forever."

"And Moses told the word of the people unto the Lord."

Did not the Lord know? Was it in human words that Moses repeated the responsive vow of the Israelites to Him? Or did he only lift up his full heart-consciousness, thrilled with the Divine message and its antiphon, before his God, with a "Thou seest: Thou hast heard"? We cannot say; we cannot sound those Sinai mysteries; we do not

know the mystery of our own prayers. We may say words; perhaps that is for our own self-defining and understanding; that we may realize what it is in us that we do "lift up unto the Lord."

God always chooses a man when He would speak with men. He takes a man apart, and tells him what He would have all people know. And the men who already believe God to be in their lives recognize his messengers and their errands when they come.

Belief can come of belief no other way. We may say, "We know our Moses; we have trust in him. We can see that he is on a height, where he can discern more than we; where great speech comes to him that we cannot hear for ourselves, but only from his mouth. We are the children of Abraham; we believe Moses and the prophets." That suffices for them who will receive Moses; to those who will not, it will not avail though one of their own kindred should arise from the dead. In the last proving and behind all, it is God himself whom we must believe. "He that is of God heareth God's voice." He only. Without Him, we cannot even recognize his Son. "He that believeth on the

Son *hath* life. He that believeth not, is condemned already."

How are we to get this life, then?

That was what the young ruler — it was also what the tempting man of the law — asked of Jesus of Nazareth. And the answer to each was, "Keep the Commandments." When you have done that, you will have entered in. When you have done that, and have *not* found entrance, you may stand and cavil at the gates.

But it must be a keeping that from the outside letter shall search into, find, and obey, the inmost heart. The heart of the Commandment is the Heart of God. It is with heart, and mind, and strength, that He will be sought, and found, and loved. And the neighbor — against whom is to be done no wrong — is to be found also, and loved, and served, in the heart of living, as another self. If you think you have done all by not doing him ill, try the other side of the commandment, and *divide with him your good*.

There are but two commands in the whole Two Tables. Upon the essential soul of these hang all the law and the prophets.

Again, — for human conduct, as in the Di-

vine Ordering of human life,—the Law was made known by Moses; the heavenly grace, the fulfilling truth, came by Jesus Christ.

We, to-day, may read the pages of the Old Law with the pages of the New waiting, folded beneath our fingers. The Children of Israel, in the Wilderness, had only the two tables of stone.

How did they read, or hear them?

How did Moses, the Mediator into whose heart and hand they were given to deliver, apprehend them both in their present power and in the potentiality of their yet further unfolding under a more glorious ministration?

CHAPTER IX

THE TEN SAYINGS

“SANCTIFY the people, to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day. The third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai.”

Put away all defilement; make at least the outer raiment of your life clean. Then ye may come up to the *foot* of the holy mountain; then the Lord God, descending in his glory upon its *top*, will meet you there. “The third day;” after the day of sanctifying, and the day of making clean. Even the commandment should not be given till the people had done that which they already knew. The primal commandment was in their hearts from the beginning: they knew the clean from the unclean. Come clean of all gross, known wickedness, before the Lord your God; then He will tell you further.

And Moses believed and carried the word:

the people of Israel also, again, believed the word of Moses.

This indeed *was* the inclusive Commandment : Put away all wickedness, and come up before the Lord your God, and He will come to you, and speak with you. The ten precepts are the divided words, — the setting forth in analysis of what God has to say and to require. They are so called in the ancient Scripture ; the Words of the Covenant, — of the meeting together of God and man ; the Words of the Testimony, — the practical attestations of eternal truth ; the particular rules of the life by which men may be alive forever.

It was no new thing, no arbitrary imposition, this inmost Truth of Life, and its condition ; no afterthought introduced into the economy of God's government ; it was what had been from the beginning ; it was the law of the abiding of men with the Lord, and their continual creation from the divine. The ordering of all act and motive from this inmost reality and command is what the Decalogue — the Ten Words — sets forth, item by item, in plain, categorical distinctness.

Moses saw and believed the absolute, integral truth. The people must be led to it by a

fractional understanding and acceptance, and an external obedience.

The Lord commanded Moses to go down among the multitudes at the mountain foot, and to keep them there. "Let not the priests and the people *break through* to come up unto the Lord, lest He break forth upon them."

The kingdom of heaven is not to be scaled by temerity, nor taken by violence. The awfulness of God's Presence is not to be confronted unprepared, or with assurance. We may not seize with naked hand even the material forces of his creation. We are set at safe distance from his sun, which energizes earth with its vitality. Heat and light are apportioned to us; we may not think to reach and touch their intense origination. The Lord will show himself to us as we can bear; as He can make us ready to receive Him. He will give us that of himself which shall bless, and not consume us. The fire of hell is the consciousness of God in the evil and unfitted soul.

"And God spake all these words."

So sayeth the Record, without intermediate explanation. And thereafter follow immediately the Ten Great and Divine Sayings.

How did the people hear them?

"All the people saw" (and heard) "the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet" (some clear, marvelous sound that rang through all), "and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off."

Even this was as a "breaking forth" upon their fearfulness, their weak unworthiness. It was with them, and yet more awfully, as with Peter, when he cried out at the wonder-working of the Lord, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!"

Infinite Power searches human conscience and makes it afraid. How can a man see God, and live?

The Israelites believed, but with a mortal terror. They had only come as far as "the mount that burned with fire." Mount Zion, the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the home of the "innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect," was yet, in its lovely glory, to be revealed. They said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

And Moses said unto the people, "Fear not:

God is come to prove you," — to show you what you may be, — to reveal to you your own nature, — to establish you in his truth, and in everlasting agreement with himself ; " that his fear may be *before your faces*, that ye sin not."

Not terror would He cause in them, nor in any hearts of men ; not dread of a *pursuing* vengeance or retribution, but a holy fear, *beforehand*, that should keep them from offending ; a true reverence, awe, worship. They were not to be afraid ; but they were to be possessed in all their souls with devout apprehension of the Greatness that is infinite ; of the Goodness so large and high, the Tenderness so deep and strong, that they are awful.

The people remained afar off, and Moses drew near ; " unto the thick darkness where God was."

The law was " ordained in the hand of a mediator." It had to be so. The people could not come up into the mount ; they were afraid, and strange. They were separate from God. That was why the law itself had to be ; it was " added because of transgression." Men need the Law, and the Mediator, because they have departed from the Promise.

The law came to bring back, and to insure,

the promise; the promise was "long before, confirmed of God in Christ," — in the sonhood. "The law could not disannul it." It is by the Promise that we recognize the Law. It is the hope born in us — the "inheritance of promise" — that confesses to the commandment. Need we ask, then, "Shall we believe the Mediator?" And "Where is his authority?" Is not his authority the very law itself? Is it not "holy, and just, and good?" If nothing of the wholeness, justice, goodness, is in us, whereby to see that, we may indeed be afraid, and beg Moses to put his own person between us and the Lord.

If God live in us, we shall understand his saying. It will vouch for itself. It is one with our own vitality. Upon Mount Sinai, and in his children's hearts, God is One. "And a Mediator is not a mediator of one." He is sent to show forth the oneness which needs no mediation.

The great Gospel Mediation is the restoring and glorifying of the Promise; it is the gift of it again, and in its fullness, "by faith of Jesus Christ." It is the everlasting confirmation of that oneness with God in Christ, which is before and above the law. It is the Atonement.

The Children of Israel had lapsed away from all this, since its beginning in Abraham ; so that they had not come into their inheritance. They needed an outward compelling ; a code of righteousness, specifically set down, of the obligation between man and God, and between man and his fellow. " The Law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ." The Law stands forever, because it is of the Truth. Truth is not of the Law. Christ, when he should come, would not indeed destroy, but he would needs fulfill. He would open up the great beauty of the perfect rightness, of the uttermost meaning and requirement of the truth, which is the Life.

Toward this, through the wilderness, with their Ten Words on the Two Tables, which were to be laid up forever in the Ark of the Testimony, the Hebrew people were to begin their forward spiritual march, not knowing all the light into which it was to lead them ; not witting of the far-off Coming of their King, the Immanuel, — " God with us," — of the Regeneration.

Neither did Moses know it all ; but he believed the Lord, and all the words the Lord gave to him, then he gave straightway to his people.

Moses did not even live to come into the earthly Canaan ; long after him, the Judges and the Kings and the Seers successively and together wrought out the wonderful significant story of the Chosen Nation in the Promised Land ; but when the Son of Man walked there with his disciples, giving them his New Testament, and in the vision of that other mountain put on before them his exceeding glory, the Prophet of the Exodus, and Elias, witness for Jehovah before the kings, stood also in shining garments beside their Lord, and talked with Him of that which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Truly the work and the word were one ; and the human history was one, and the long, slow centuries of its time-unfolding were as nothing.

The Ten Sayings of Moses were the Two of Christ.

Believe in the Lord God, the Leader of your life out of the house of bondage.

Have no other gods but Me : look to no power but mine.

Make no image or likeness of anything to yourselves, — no hewn or graven form for beauty or reverence in the place of my Beauty

and Worship ; no sensuously imaged and limited thing, no pictured vision, no representation to yourselves of anything in the tangible or intangible, in the high or the low, or in the hidden secrets of my creation, — to seek or to serve apart from Me ; to bow down to in your will and your desire, and your giving of yourselves in soul and purpose. I am a jealous God. I will have you give yourselves to nothing short of Me. For in Me only is your life. It is your own life that I am jealous for. I have made you for myself, and I will have you, that I may give you all. If you worship these *things* instead of Me, your iniquity shall follow you, and your children, where my loving-kindness should have been ; the unequalness that you make of your life shall be handed down into and visited upon the lives of the third and fourth generations.

My Name is in all things ; all things declare Me : receive all things in My Name, and profane it not, nor take it to your own vain, separate purpose.

Keep holy time with Me ; keep my Rest of the Spirit that I keep in and after all my work. Rest ye on every seventh day, to remember this : it is my Sabbath with you.

These are the Commandments that concern you with Me.

Hold ye in all honor and love the relations in which I have put you with each other ; in families, and in your human kind ; for ye are all a family in the earth. Be loyal, upright, each one in your place and name ; do justly ; live purely ; that father and mother, tribe and race, be not shamed, but ennobled ; so that land and lineage, home and kindred, given you of the Lord, may endure, and be lifted up of Him forever.

Kill not ; hurt not ; spoil not each other's life in any way. To wound life, to deprive it, is to take it, by just so much.

Be not unclean : but keep your very body holy.

Take nothing from your neighbor ; neither possession, nor time, nor opportunity, nor praise, nor rightful pleasure ; take nothing to yourself that is not rightly yours.

Bear no false witness, nor say any malicious word, nor consent to any unjust reproach ; neither cherish any secret uncharitableness ; for that is to bear false witness in your heart.

And desire covetously nothing that is your neighbor's.

These are the Commandments that concern you with each other.

And the two are one ; for they are the Law of Life flowing forth from My Life into yours. And that is Love.

How else than upon such inmost principle did Moses receive and record and publish the Ten Sayings ?

Within that " thick darkness " and mystery and fear, — behind the cloud and the smoke and the lightnings, — where the leader of the Israelites went up serenely at God's call, knowing that the shining peace of his Presence was at the heart of it, and listened for the Voice that came to him from out the invisibleness of the Central Glory, — what had God to say and show to him but the interior word, the inspiring verity, that is behind all law and constitution, out of which all rule is expounded and all system built? Was it possible that Moses should be taken into less than the whole counsel of God, which should illuminate to him the types and statutes that he was to deliver to the people with strenuous command for their observance ?

Common men may live under exterior, tem-

porary system and be safe, without knowing why ; but they to whom it is given to devise and order have had the inner light upon that which represents ; the light of the unshakable and everlasting. The servants who draw the water know.

We are not told in the narrative how or how far this inspiration was then given. We are not told that at this first time Moses himself, even, went in behind, to the heart of the "thick darkness" where the Glory was. But he was received *within the fear* ; close to God's side, as behind the bodily danger. He was able to come "near the thick darkness" that appalled them who were afar off, and to know that in that very darkness was the safe and loving Presence of the Lord. We find simply the declaration that the Commandments had been spoken unto all Israel from the height of Sinai and from out its tremendous environment, and that these Ten Sayings were the form and translation of the awful utterance.

Perhaps while to the people the mountain flamed and smoked, and "it thundered," "an angel spake" to the hearing inward ear of Moses, and the great conception of the Perfect

Law was formed within his soul. We are not told that the people heard a single enunciated word. But the Law *was*; and it was given there and then; it entered, somehow, into the spirit of the Prophet and the life of the nation. On Sinai God came down, and made known his will; and from that hour it was handed down to the generations.

In the quietness beyond the elemental tumults, the Lord greeted Moses in the spirit, and went on to show him His own sublime meanings and definite requirements. At the foundation, and in the heart of all, were the vital principles and decrees of the Ten Sayings.

The whole being of Moses was possessed with the majesty of the Divine word, the mighty sense of intimacy and nearness within the very shadow of the Highest. This experience was of itself both revelation and message. The command of God was in his feeling of it.

"Thou shalt say thus unto the children of Israel," it came to him as it were in audible speech, "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven."

Therefore, ye shall not make any gods of

silver with me, nor unto yourselves any gods of gold.

Ye shall make an altar unto me, but it shall be an altar of earth ; the earth that I have created and formed ; the earth that is alive and fruitful with my imparted life. Thereon ye shall sacrifice — make holy to me — the gifts of earth, thy sheep, thine oxen ; and wherever I record my name *I will come to thee*, and I will bless thee.

If thou wilt make me an altar of stone, it shall not be of hewn stone ; it shall be of the stone that I have made in the earth. Thou shalt not lift up thy human tool upon it.

These, in their meaning, almost in their literal word, were the commandments of the Lord spoken to Moses, that he might deliver again to the people. And thereafter the instruction went on, — the “judgments” of righteousness in detailed ordinance, which should be the practical keeping of the Law of the Ten Sayings.

In every particular, the exposition and application were shown to the mind of Moses, and shaped and framed themselves in his deep thought and communing with his God. It was a long, intense study and listening ; a

taking in and assimilating that of the Eternal Wisdom which concerned his people. Apart from all interruption and disturbance, alone with the Supreme, the time of this first seclusion, whose duration is not precisely indicated, went by in a rapt absorption. The rule and method of a divine governing in the earth, in the least, daily affairs of common men, was organizing itself to the Prophet's high perception. He took a power in his hand, and an authority in his consciousness, from the Most High himself and none other, wherewith to return, full-commissioned, with the glory of heavenly things in his face, to the congregation. And at the end of the Commandment came again the Promise; the promise of the Covenant; the Coming-unto, — the Going-with, — the Leading.

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Be-aware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; *for my name is in him.* But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.”

. . . "I will not drive them out before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."

Man's salvation shall not be in a hurry, before he is ready to be saved. God will be tender with his wheat, even in the uprooting of the tares.

The enemies of the Hebrew pilgrims were the Amorite and the Hittite, the Perizzite and the Canaanite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. They were to be cut off, and the people ruled by God were to rule in the Promised Country. But who can help seeing what those wild, idolatrous tribes, holding no covenant with the One God and his Righteousness, stand for and represent in the great history of the earthly and the heavenly resolving its issues through all the ages, as enemies to be overcome and displaced before the onward march of a humanity redeemed and pledged to an unswerving allegiance to the Divine, and ordered and led on by the Jehovah-Angel?

Is any less, or different, conquering in the Divine Might carried on in the individual hu-

man spirit, from before whom the Lord drives out its enemies, that He may lead it into its larger, happier life in the Loyal Land? Is it not the same beautiful Patience that deals with us gradually in our weakness, our partial knowledges, our besetments with old, unvanquished sins, even ; driving out our evils "by little and little," according to the increase of our spiritual power to possess ourselves, lest in the sudden "desolation of the land" the animal nature, like the "beast of the field," be left to rise up anew in the yet feeble soul, and strengthen itself afresh against us?

Was it not in the same tender pity that the Lord Christ refused a "sign" that might have forced the faith of a "wicked generation," and told them of the man out of whom a terrible possession of an unclean spirit seemed to have gone, until the house of his life was "empty, swept, and garnished ;" and then returned, with seven worse devils, to "enter in and dwell there"?

And who can doubt that the spirit of Moses, consciously or unconsciously, was impressed upon and dominated by something far greater than the vision of a purpose and hope for the establishment and well-being, in merely natu-

ral things, here, in a small space upon this present earth, of a few generations of a few chosen tribes, themselves of a mixed good and evil nature and action, in the place of a few others only a little more blind and rude and sensual than they? How could it have been but that the soul of the seer was swept by the grand conviction, of which this passing story of the Israelites was only one little illustration, that there is a Lord God of the heaven and the earth, that He alone rules in the creation and in the affairs of men, and that only the soul, or the people, that follows Him and keeps his commandment, can come to and possess its inheritance in all that He has prepared for the believing and obedient? Not as children of Israel or of Abraham, only, were these Hebrews to be saved from their enemies and blessed with the great possession and the satisfied life of the Land of the Beyond, but as children and heirs of the Almighty Father. To drink milk, and to eat honey, was this all the end of the wandering and warfare? Or was it to belong to God, — to join the human to the Divine, — to live out his thought, to receive his word, to represent Him, each man in his own place where the Lord would put

him, in the certainty of the absolute blessedness of that nation — so made a nation — whose lawgiver, whose ruler, whose counselor, defender, upholder, provider is Jehovah of hosts?

CHAPTER X

FORTY DAYS IN THE MOUNT

AND God said again to Moses, "Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord."

Early in the morning Moses "rose up, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, — according to the twelve tribes of Israel." An earth-altar, as the Lord had commanded; a raising up of the very matter of the earth itself to the praise and worship of the Maker. And here the young men of Israel brought their sacrifices, the "peace-offerings," from their flocks, to make sign of pact and unity with God in holy covenant. And Moses "took the book of the covenant," — the tables of stone being not yet given, — in which he had written "all the words of the Lord," and "read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do,

and be obedient." And Moses "took the blood," — the emblem and reality of offered life, — "and sprinkled it upon the people, saying, Behold the blood of the Covenant." Ye are made of one blood with God, — of one life with Him, — "by all these words" which He hath spoken and promised, and to which ye have solemnly declared allegiance.

And so, with Aaron and his sons, and the seventy elders, he went up into the mountain that was still covered with the cloud where God was.

"And they saw the God of Israel; and under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."

Through the cloud they saw into the ineffable shining, that transformed the craggy height into the seeming of a "paved work" of blue, transparent gems, clear and wide and bright as the transparence of the firmament. And they ate and drank — as a solemn Communion — in that Presence of the Lord, these "nobles of the children of Israel;" and "He laid not his hand upon them."

But unto Moses He called with further summons, "Come up to me in the mount, and be"

(abide) "there; and I will give you tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them."

"That I have written." And "upon tables of stone." The Word, — the Law, — that I have put into all my doing and creating, and made everlasting.

"Written with the finger of God." This was what was said later, of the two tablets given into the hands of Moses at the end of the great Forty Days. Was it a literal script, graven on the faces of the scales of rock, by the Divine Hand, in a visible lettering? Or did Moses, by the same inspiration that had spoken to him all the Will of the Lord, and seeing how in the very foundations of the earth — the stones of its material building — lay the eternal sign and declaration of the same Will and Truth that were now given in holy spoken commandment to his people, lift reverently from that illumined pavement beneath the feet of God the two smooth tables, significantly ready, upon which, in God's name and as God's witness, he inscribed the Ten Sayings, to take them down for the keeping and reminding of Israel, in a form that should not perish through all the generations? Be-

fore the Face of God, — with the Divine Voice in his heart, and the Finger of God thus pointing him to what he should do, — would not Moses feel that Finger as it guided his, and declare truly that the writing was of the Lord?

What else is inspiration, miracle, or any power, but the thought and act of God, humanly or in nature made experience or sign?

“If I, with the finger of God, cast out devils,” said Jesus Christ, “no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.”

Moses forgot himself, utterly, in his yielding to the Lord. If a man can do that, God will use his heart, his brain, his hand, for his own work. The kingdom, — the power, — of God has come upon him. And the man, claiming nothing for himself, will but simply say truth, “It is the Lord.”

Is there any difficulty in receiving this? And is the story any less sublime?

The whole trouble with crediting the Bible narrative is that men do not recognize, in themselves and in all that truly and purely comes to them, this word and act of God. They do not stand in the attitude of Moses; hence what Moses saw and knew, and declared simply in the strong, natural language of type

and feeling, they know not how to receive. They make a thing extraneous, and then quarrel with the improbability of the extraneous circumstance. This — not the clear, spiritual interpretation — is the begging of the question.

“And Moses went up into the Mount of God.” “And a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days;” the measure of time that stands for measurement of the periods of creation, by that Word which was from the beginning with God. “And the seventh day,” — the day of fulfillment and rest that the Lord ordained to keep with his people, — “he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst” — into the heart — “of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount,” “into the glory: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”

CHAPTER XI

THE TABERNACLE

WITHIN the cloud, the Tabernacle.

Behind the thick darkness, the Eternal Light.

Beyond the veil, the manifest Presence of the Most Holy.

Moses entered into that within the veil; Aaron, his sons, and the elders waited and worshiped without. There is a worship that yet must wait below; that does not attain to the intimate communion. Moses found out what it is to "be" with God. He learned the experience of that which David sang long after:—

"He shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock."

He learned that which Job remembered of the "former days" when he dwelt in the light, and God's "visitation preserved his spirit."

“O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me : when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness : as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

Rapt into this joy, this nearness, the splendor of its inmost truth — the truth that such a nearness could be — took possession of the spirit of the Hebrew leader. It was not for him alone to learn and realize. It was to be a great revelation. It concerned all men. It concerned first this people of Israel, through whom God would make known that it is in Him and with Him his children live ; that He makes tent and dwelling-place with the generations, and in the secret experience of every living man. It was the doctrine of the Abiding Word.

How should Moses interpret this great thing to the people ; this hidden fellowship with the Almighty which neither Aaron nor all the priests and elders could understand ? With what sign should he show them this beyond, — this within, — this calm and safety behind the mystery and the wonders and the terrors, — shut off as they were by the cloud

and thick darkness of their ignorance and sin?

Filled with the glory and the demand, — forgetting time, forgetting himself, and the waiting multitude, — he lapsed into his long sojourn upon Sinai, watching and listening, with all his being, for what God would show and say.

And the Lord did show and tell him all. The beautiful pattern of a visible teaching began unfolding itself before him, traced to his thought as by an illumining finger. A plan was evolved to his comprehension; a representation was given him that should signify to all the people this lovely mystery, this abiding of God in their midst, this possible approach of his souls to himself.

The vision of a typifying Tabernacle arose and grew before his inward seeing.

Of the purest things of light and preciousness it should be made.

Of the offerings “given willingly with the heart” it should be fashioned.

Every man should bring of his own, of his best. Gold, and silver, and brass; for purity, for value, for enduringness. Fine linen, and beautiful color; curtains of light, like the cur-

tains of the firmament, for a tent through which the Presence should glow; in hues of the wonderful refractions into which the splendor of heaven divides itself through the weaving and texture of the earthly.

Oil for the lamps of the Lord; spices and incense for fragrance, which is the sweet feeding of true perceptions, and the upward wafting of gladness and thanksgiving.

Precious stones and crystals, each filled with a separate radiance, alive with its own, one light from the All-Glory.

Wood of the Arabian acacia, perfect of growth, firm and strong; precious with gum distilled and stored in its veins, drawn by its clean life from the elements of the rank earth.

All the signs and tokens of the heavenly in the material; all shining, and strength, and sweetness, and righteous relations of form and measure and number; all sureness, and pureness, and permanence: these to be chosen and wrought out to a sacred beauty, a divine disclosure. No tool of heathenism to be lifted up upon the work; no spirit of heathenism to be in the thought or use of it, but a hallowing of the Name of the Most High, as He himself has written it in things. Nothing of idol-

atry, — that is a stopping short at the sign, — but *worship*, reaching through the sign by the worth-ship that is set in it, and finding the Most Holy.

It should be a building for and to the Lord ; an annunciation and a witness that God himself is at the heart of things, and will there be recognized. That He inhabits his creation ; that from the burning bush to the soul of man, all is the Temple of the Holy Ghost ; that “by the things that are made and visible are clearly shown the things that are invisible, even the Eternal Power and Godhead.” That so we ourselves dwell in spirit with spirit, and not alone as material creatures in a world of matter.

This knowledge is Re-ligion ; the binding again together of the Spirit and the flesh, the temporal and the eternal. It is the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting.

This conception was the central experience of the life of Moses ; his most interior apprehension and belief. It may have been so interior that he did not at the first comprehend it all himself ; that does not say that it was not in him, to grow to comprehension more and more. We feel even before we know. It was

his inspiration ; the reality of his commission. It was what the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant meant to him, and should mean to the Hebrew nation and to the world. The things, the words, were to be a perpetual enshrinement and expression of the one ineffable Mystery ; the sublimely simple, vital Fact of all being and existence.

Unless this had been in the deep heart of Moses, there could have been no Jewish law, no ceremonial ; any more than without the moving of the Spirit of God there could have been in the beginning a creation.

The Tabernacle was type of the Incarnation.

“ If the ministration of death,” — of the perishing, — “ graven in stones,” — in the mere things of the earth, — “ was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious ? ”

“ The Law was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ.” And the Christ is Immanuel : *God with every one of us.*

The doctrine of the Tabernacle is the secret of the Father with his humanity. It was shadowed forth by Moses : it was fulfilled in Jesus, born in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord.

Herein is the great Unity of the Old and the New; it could never be destroyed, but must be forever made more manifest.

The Tabernacle was, then, the sign of the Indwelling. God was in the midst of his people; in the midst of the heart-life of every one of his children.

The Ceremonial was for representation of approach to this Holy Presence; of direct intercourse with the Divine. It was the way and form of worship.

To the last beautiful particular of the things of the Sanctuary, to the perfect illustration in substance, shape, color, workmanship, fitting, and use, of every sign with which the people, on their part, were to come before their God, drawing near to him, and making language of the "gifts and creatures," which He had "sanctified with his Word and Holy Spirit," that they should be language, and that language should be born of them; in all these details, the vision and the plan plainly specified themselves to the open intuition of God's servant.

The holy garments for the priests; every vestment and ornament, — the ephod, the

breastplate, the robe, the girdle, the mitre ; the onyx stones graven with the twelve names of Israel, six on one side and six on the other, to be borne on the shoulders of Aaron before the Lord ; the wreathen chains, with rings and ouches, by which the jeweled breastplate — a separate signet-stone for every tribe, with again the graven names — should hang from the onyx fastenings upon the bosom of the priest, that he should “ bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually ; ” the mystical Urim and Thummim, — glory and holiness set as by precious gems in the breastplate, that they should “ be upon Aaron’s heart when he goeth in before the Lord,” and that of the heavenly light and perfection should come counsel and judgment when he asked them of God for the people in any matter ; the alternate bells of gold and pomegranates bordering the robe, sounding sweet chimes of call and permission to go in and out before the Most Holy, and betokening the fruit-bearing of a full and sweet obedience that must follow every call and privilege ; the band of gold for the forefront of the mitre

upon Aaron's forehead, inscribed with the declaration of the meaning of all meanings, the conclusion of all ordinance, — "*Holiness to the Lord*;" the sweet-compounded incense to be burned upon the altar, sending up as to the throne of God the odors "which are the prayers of saints," — a perfume never to be used for their own pleasure, but always offered for the pleasure of the Lord, and always accompanied by the prayers of the congregation at the time of morning and evening incense; — all this garb and ritual took grand array and presentment before the inspired imagination of Moses, and became already in his thought a glorious, completed system of visible annunciation that should be continually made to the generations of Israel in their solemnly commanded observance.

Heart and brain were glowing; fervid, as from a quickening flame; intense with eagerness to go down, and proclaim, and institute the sacred work; to possess the whole congregation with the same divine ardor and energy; to satisfy the people, and show them the great light they had been groping for; to begin the Revelation that was to make known and realize at last the whole thought and purpose of God with men.

He longed to declare to Bezaleel the son of Uri, and to Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, the gifts and calling of Jehovah to them especially, — that He had “filled them” with his own Spirit, “in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,” and that “into the hearts of all that are wisehearted” He had “put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded.”

Filled and thrilled was the soul of Moses with all this; with the deep and holy understanding that in the things of creation God had hidden his own secret word of wisdom and beauty, and in the hearts of men the discernment that should meet and recognize, use and sanctify all things in the Spirit. He took the two tables of stone, “written with the finger of God,” and knew that God for that time and for present commandment had “made an end of communing with him;” and he listened only for the word of the Lord that he should go down.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN CALF

THE word came. Was it what we in our ignorance call *presentiment*, or in our superstition second sight, when the Spirit tells us suddenly something in the spirit of which our senses can as yet know nothing?

“Get thee down,” the command was spoken; inwardly, we must believe, as all the other instruction and intercourse had been given; for surely it is as Spirit with spirit that the Lord must speak, — “Get thee down; for thy people have corrupted themselves.” They have turned aside from me, and made an idol, and “have worshiped and sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

It was a clear-seeing. It showed itself all at once, over against his own sublime joy, — the thing he had to go back to; the blindness and “stiff-neckedness” he would have to

encounter, and upon which he would have to pour his precious revelation of the truth.

"They will not see ; they will not receive ; they will not even have waited for me these forty days and forty nights," he thought, as indeed they had not ; even Aaron and the elders had not "tarried" where they were bidden, but had gone down at the summons of the impatient multitude, to yield to its rebellious importunity ; only his own minister, Joshua, had remained steadfastly near, in the mountain solitude.

The refractory people had already been on the verge of mutiny, apostasy, idolatry ; this came back to the mind of Moses with a quenching of his exulting zeal ; in the high tension of his spiritual faculties, his very vision projected itself with his thought, and he beheld the congregation adoring the molten image which their hands had made. "The Lord said unto him," the text tells us, and tells us true. In the spirit, with the Lord, he looked and felt with the Lord's own sight and knowledge ; it was "thought-transference" from the all-knowing mind of God.

So that, turning from the instant flash of keen impression, he put himself at one with

the Lord himself, and shared his anger, feeling with a mighty convulsion of his whole being some small sense of that which must be in the indignation of a Perfect Righteousness.

“Let me alone, that I may consume them,” he heard God say. “And I will make of *thee* a great nation.” Not with impulse of a selfish ambition, a hope in his own opportunity through the misdoing of others, did this suggest itself ; but rather, we must think, knowing all the self-abnegation of Moses, in a steadfast, determined loyalty to the grand light and commandment he only had received, even if he only should believe in and live for it ; in a faith that the truth should stand, and yet grow in the earth, though all Israel should desert and repudiate it ; that there should yet be a nation whose God should be the Lord ; that God was “able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” All alone, if that must be, he would hold fast ; all alone he would cherish the revelation ; God himself would provide ; He would do the rest.

And then he shared, as he had shared the anger, the swift Divine Compassion ; one with the wrath, as the shining light is one with the threatening peal ; only separate to human ear

and eye that can never receive the instant whole, or know how even the consuming flash is out of the quick heart of Love, and is intense for life, and not destruction.

The Spirit of God pleaded in Moses back to God himself, ready to be pleaded with: "Remember thy promise and thy covenant, Lord," he prayed; "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that thou swarest should be as the stars of heaven, and the land that thou saidst they should inherit forever. Turn from thy wrath, and forgive even this evil to thy people."

And the Lord—who commands the forgiveness of seventy times seven offenses—"repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

Did Moses rebuke Jehovah? Did he teach Him his own lovingkindness and tender mercy? No: but he entered into the very counsels of the Most High; into justice and judgment, long-suffering and redemption; finding them each in Him, and finding them all as one.

The human wrath, that forgets forgiveness for the moment, stirred Moses passionately when he came down with Joshua into the

camp, and saw the image, and the dancing, the wild orgie of a heathen demonolatry, and Aaron his brother, the high priest of the Living God, in the midst of it all, tolerating, countenancing, with such futile half-control and direction as he might. "The people were set on mischief," he told the angry prophet, who had dashed down the two tables of the Law, significantly broken at a crash, — for what was a holy and perfect law to such a people as this, outraging it beforehand? And to the stern demand of his brother and commander that he should declare what had brought it about that he had permitted this great sin, Aaron weakly answered: "Thou knowest them; they would have gods. I bade them bring their gold, and I cast it into the fire, and there came out — this calf!"

After the fires of Sinai, and the visible glory of God, — this! Could Aaron more keenly, more absurdly, have satirized himself?

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and sent forth out of his great, indignant soul a strong voice in few, short words: —

"Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come to me!"

And all the sons of Levi came.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLIFT OF THE ROCK

THEN followed the terrible slaughter of kinsman by kinsman, throughout the camp of the Israelites, at the hands of the sons of Levi, by the command of Moses, until there had "fallen of the people that day about three thousand men."

An awful expurgation of idolatry at which we shudder when we read, and question whether this were human wrath and cruelty or the ordaining judgment of God. And if it were of God, can the God of the Old Testament and of the New be one? How can we reconcile it? In what light can we receive it?

I think it must be in the light in which it came to Moses. We are studying what he believed. God is One, but He is Infinite. Men are small, many, separate, and diverse. Men live in successions, of personal growth and of the world's history. One man — one time — does not behold, nor live, the whole,

eternal Truth. And yet we need have no trouble in discerning how each true soul has had a grasp of something which is of the eternal, the perfect.

Moses had hold of God ; the God whose manifest work in man is of the holy against the unholy ; not against the man, but against the evil that would destroy man. The bad, the false, must be done away. He who would have the wicked eye, the guilty hand, plucked out, cut off, that the living soul might be saved, spoke the same word in the wilderness of Arabia, by the order and act of his servant Moses, that He spoke by his Christ on the mountain in Galilee, in his sermon of the true blessedness and the absolute righteousness ; and again in the selfsame unflinching words by the Lake of Gennesaret, just after his heavenly Transfiguration and his tender healing of the lunatic boy, when his disciples "disputed by the way" as they went down, about a selfish greatness. Greatness, he told them, is service and sacrifice. Evil and offense must be purged out. It is he who will endure, and relinquish, and submit to the discipline of God, who shall come out into the life everlasting. "Every one shall be salted with fire," he told them.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" is the question put to all souls in great test hours. On the Lord's side, even against yourselves, when yourselves need cleansing.

Bodily life has been of little account throughout history, either sacred or profane. Something grander, more real, has always swept it aside. Even savagery and torture have done their work, however brutally, in some intended conquering of the brutal; of cowardice, sloth, of beastly, low content: these have been subjugated to ideals of courage, prowess, fortitude, honor, as honor might be held.

Moses lived in his own time, and God worked in it with him, as He works in ours with us. Who shall say that the slaughter of the idolatrous Hebrews, corrupters of their brethren, enslavers of them to old, base superstitions and impurities, was work of pitiless, malignant cruelty, and our own war of emancipation was a struggle, a noble sacrifice, for the Right against the Wrong? Judge history and Providence alike and fairly all the way down, you who would cast aside the whole record and motive of a grand new establishment of Faith in the world, in place of igno-

rant sensualities, because of pain and conflict and bloodshed, through which in the crude nature and handling of the human, — the very human that it was given to lift up above passions and cruelties of hate and vengeance, — it had to come.

Life marches on by paths of death. We submit to it in the progress of nations, in the initiatives of science, in all that makes a grand, final, universal gain, or aims at such, for the enlarging interests of humanity. We must read the Exodus as we read the passing chapters of the swiftly unrolling chronicles of our own century. Men must die; but man must live. And we may leave the individual — even our own personal, thinking, doubting, fearing, hoping, trusting individuality — to Him who cares for the sparrow that falls, and for every hair upon every head, however smitten. Who “spared not his own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all.” For every man is still a part, and shall so survive, of the very, whole Humanity for which man suffers. What is to be saved, to be glorified, to be lifted up and made complete in God, but this very aggregate of individualities? If the drop were lost, where were the ocean?

It surely was not mere wrathful vengeance, mere passion of indignation sating itself with destruction, that had moved Moses to this terrible execution. "Consecrate yourselves this day to the Lord," he had told the Levites, called to be the avengers, "that this day He may bestow upon you a blessing."

He made the people do, in their tribes and by multitudes, what every soul must do in forswearing sense and sin. The dearest, most intimate things must be cast off, cut down, the moment they are known to be sins, idolatries. And in the day that this is done, the Lord will fill the life, so purged and consecrated, with his blessing.

Moreover, the prophet went back once more into the mountain, seeking out his God, with a great compassion and repentance for his people urging upon his heart. Already the holy mystery of atonement was moving between man and God. "I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin," was the word with which Moses left the living with their dead upon the morrow.

And before the Lord he came with broken, sobbing words: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of

gold. Yet, *now*, if thou wilt forgive their sin ——” No words fill up the pause; the ordinary, concise, explicit scripture suddenly fails; the voice stops; the break was filled by a mute surging of the human pain toward the Infinite Pity; by a down-flow of that Pity into the very heart-life of the man who prayed. It was as if “He who spared not his own Son” because “He so loved the world” — He who puts our prayers into our hearts because the answer is already in his own — made Moses say, with low, tender, utterly self-immolating entreaty, “And if not, blot *me*, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written.”

It was the divineness of an intercession which can only be that of the Spirit with Itself in the “breathings that cannot be uttered.”

Was there not forgiveness, patience with passing ignorance, a promise of redemption, even in the words that came to Moses in the Lord’s reply? Was there not in them the mercy that sees how men sin against their own half-understandings, — how as “against the son of man they may blaspheme,” — nor yet

mean, nor know, any sin or blasphemy against the Supreme and Holy Spirit? Was there not the pleading of the Cross,—the “forgive them, for they know not what they do,”—uttered as from God’s heart to the leader of his people, in the sentence we may seem to hear gently, not vindictively pronounced, “Whosoever hath sinned against *me*, him will I blot out of my book”?

Has man ever, in any willful daring, reached to the very Me of the Almighty, so—deliberately and consciously—to sin? Is there not a depth in the Infinite Heart that cannot be sinned against by any delusions or waywardnesses of ordinary tempted earthliness? Does not God so reserve in himself the right to pardon? Is not this the “Lamb in the midst of the Throne,”—the Tenderness in the bosom of Almightyness,—which bears forever, and yearns over forever, the losses and wanderings of his children while they keep away from Him?

“*Therefore*,” now go, the command proceeded; “lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee.”

“I will not leave you comfortless; I will

come to you." So said the Son, also, when he had been rejected, and men waited to crucify him, and thrust him out of his own world,—the world that in him "God so loved."

"Lead my people to the place" where I am waiting for them. Mine Angel shall show you all the way. "*Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.*"

That which their sin has been,—which they know not now,—then shall they feel and know; to feel and know it is salvation. It is even so that I will visit, and I will save."

"And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made."

This, then, here and always, is the word of the Lord: I will smite, I will wound, I will chastise, for sin.—The *because* is in the New Testament: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent."

"I will send an angel before thee; . . . I will not go up in the midst of thee."

There was the difference. Their sin had not sent the Lord away from their life and its

guidance; they were still his people, his children; still He would go before them by his Angel; but in the *heart* of them, in their midst, his life with their life, to their knowledge and joy, He would not abide. "Lest I consume thee," He told Moses. There was mercy in the very penalty. The people who had made idols to themselves could not bear God in their midst. They had of their own will and deed put off the promise. The Tabernacle and its beauty were not yet for them. Every man had to stand in his own tent door when Moses went out into the tabernacle, which he had "pitched without the camp."

The ineffable Presence met him there; the people saw the sign of it as a cloud, as they had seen it upon the mountain; it "stood as a pillar at the door;" but Moses had entered in, and the Lord talked with him, "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

Face to face; directly; without blind or hindrance, even of sign, but thought to thought, word to word, understanding to understanding. We see afterward how this must be meant. It was not vision, to mortal eye, of a Divine Countenance in awful glory; God told him, presently, that this could not be. "Thou

canst not *see* my face ; there shall no man see me, and live." But to the pleading of Moses, half bewildered between his own strong, realizing faith and the sentence of blindness upon his people, — the refusal to them of that which they had refused ; to his almost expostulating prayer, "See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people ; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou also hast found grace in my sight. If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way," — to this beseeching the Lord answered, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

And Moses said again unto the Lord, "If thy Presence go not, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight ? Is it not in that thou goest with us ?"

Moses desired with a great longing the continued manifestation ; that the glory should not be taken away from the tabernacle, but that God should continue openly "in the midst" with his people.

"I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken," the Lord assured him. But He

would do it in his own way. He would make it evident before the nations that Israel was his own nation, "separated," as Moses had said, by their covenant with Him "from all the people that were upon the face of the earth."

"Thou hast found grace in my sight, therefore I will do this that thou hast spoken."

Still Moses wrestled and urged. He was like Jacob, in the wrestling by which he became Israel, when he declared, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Still he said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

And He said, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee." "I will be gracious, and show mercy." He was giving Moses the true life-sign; something beyond any visible wonder; something that should be to him unfailing testimony of daily abiding, and no transient splendor; He was taking him into yet diviner, simpler mysteries than any he had fully known.

Then it was that He said, "Thou canst not see my face;" earthly sight may not have that vision, and endure. "But I will take thee with me, and hide thee in a place by me; thou shalt stand fast upon a rock." Was not

this abiding sense of word and presence the Rock upon which the Christ would build his church ?

“ And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand as I pass by ; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts ; but my face shall not be seen.”

The things I *shall have done* will show me to thee ; in a safe rest under my hand I will cover thee ; in a place made for thee in the Everlasting Might I will hold thee, and my glory shall pass by ; thou shalt wait, and trust ; and when my hand is lifted, thou shalt know that it has been I, and by the *afterward* thou shalt discern me, and shalt learn that I have been, and will be always, near.

Is not this what God says in the making of his history with men ?

Whatever happens, — in the imperfect conditions and the delusions, transgressions, and passionate throes and outbursts of a nature evolving, individually and in the race, from lowest beginnings of sense and impulse to highest knowledges and affections, — thou, Believing Soul ! art in the clift of the Eter-

nal Rock, covered, for thine own safety, — hidden from that which is too great for thee, — until the hour of my revelation shall have come ; until the things that I do, which thou knowest not now, thou shalt know in the hereafter. Be still, now, and know only that I am God !

How long it may have been after this that Moses found himself called of the Lord to go up again into the mountain, bringing the two new-hewn tables of stone to receive a second time the commandments for the people, — bidden to listen also to a repeated teaching concerning the Covenant and the Tabernacle, and take a fresh permission and authority for instituting the beautiful system of sign that had been profaned beforehand and put in abeyance by the idolatrous sin of the congregation, — we do not know ; but we can understand what the putting off, and the pause, must have meant.

They who could make and worship a golden calf — a sign of their own, and a *thing* only — were not fit and ready to receive and use the holy signs which God would set for them to learn himself by. They would have stopped

again at the material; we know they did so stop, after all, in their ceremonies and traditions, in the external oblation, in the blood of animal sacrifice that reached not to the offering of human hearts, in the mint, anise, and cummin of small, perfunctory service. What use to build at once the lovely tabernacle that would be to them only another work of their own hands, with its blue and its scarlet, and fine-twined linen, and gold and brass? What better would it be to worship these than the image of molten metal that had "come out of the fire" when Aaron cast their foolish trinkets into it? Where would be the Real Presence of the Lord to them?

The joy of Moses in its revelation and in the tokens that should show it forth, was quenched against the deadness and hardness of a gross, ignorant fetichism. The Truth must wait. The Holy cannot be given to the unclean.

There was a blank of common life, a space of excommunication, between message and message, glory and glory, uttered and opened for their souls by the Spirit of the Lord.

But at last, and again, His time came.

"Be ready, and come up in the morning. Present thyself to me in the top of the mount,"

God said to the heart-discouraged, soul-believing Prophet. "No man shall come up with thee, nor be seen in the whole mount. Let not even the flocks and herds feed before it."

Into that awful solitude, that beautiful Mystery, Moses climbed again. He left his very own mortal, as it were, behind him, and went up in the pure spirit, forgetting earth, to Jehovah. Telling the story over to his people afterward, he says, and repeats at further points of the narration, "*I fell down before the Lord.*"

Self-relinquishment. That is the true worship, — the only attitude of reciprocity. It is at once the offering and the obtaining. Religion is simply the laying of life — each thing and thought of life as it comes — down before the Lord. Sorrow, anguish, fear, anxiety; repentance, renunciation of evil, longing for cleansing and absolution; hope, motive, purpose, pleasure, success; little common annoyances or satisfactions, — everything, — brought to Him, laid open before Him, to help or heal, to use, to sanctify with the Divine sympathy and permission, — his gladness to be acknowledged in our gladness, his pity in our pain, his commandment in our wish and

intent, — this is just all of it. This is Moses in the mountain; this it is to “fall down before the Lord.”

“O come,” the beautiful Psalm sings to us, “let us worship and fall down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is the Lord our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” wholeness; “let the *whole earth*,” our whole life in the earthly, “stand in awe of Him. For He cometh, for He cometh, to judge the earth;” to set the earthly right in his sight, and in harmony with the heavenly; “and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth.”

Certainly Moses upon Sinai, and King David in Jerusalem, believed the same thing, rejoiced in the same command and keeping.

The Lord gave his words into the heart of Moses, whose heart lay open before Him.

“Write thou these words,” He said. Make record of them. “For after the tenor of these words I have made covenant with thee, and with Israel.”

And again the vision and the hearing lasted

forty days and forty nights. The whole being of Moses was again filled and illuminated, while he "neither ate bread nor drank wine," but hearkened to the Lord, by whose word, and not by bread alone, men live; and "wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

At last, with the complete grand thought rebuilt in him, ready to be detailed in a careful order of law and observance to the people, "in all things after the pattern showed in the mount," he descended once more with the stone tables in his hands, with the shining in his face, and the heavenly intelligence raying from his temples, into the camp upon the plain, at the far-stretching foot of the solitary steep of Sinai.

Aaron and the people were afraid, for the shining of his face, for the glory of God was in it; he had to veil himself to speak with them; and afterward, whensoever he went in to speak unto the Lord, he went "face to face" with the tender, enfolding, penetrating radiance; but when he came out with the commands for Israel, he "put the veil upon his face again."

So Christ, coming down from the glory that

he had with the Father before the world was, did veil himself with mortal flesh, that he might lead all flesh by the "new and living way, into the holiest."

The Clift in the Rock is the Human Heart of Christ.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SEDITION OF AARON AND MIRIAM

IN the Book of Numbers account is given of a seditious questioning which Miriam and Aaron brought up between themselves in regard to Moses their brother, with whom they were associated in the deliverance of the Hebrew people, and in prophetic gifts of inspiration from the Lord. They took exception all at once, ostensibly, because Moses "had married an Ethiopian woman." They judged him in his ordinary, human relation; perhaps in some human weakness, or folly, as they deemed it; and they said, "Is Moses indeed, — this man Moses who is not in all things above other men, or even wise in his own life-ordering, — chief over us all in the very counsels and authority of God? Hath the Lord spoken only by him? Hath He not also spoken by us? *And the Lord heard it.*"

It was a private whisper, doubtless; the mere initial breathing of discontent. Moses,

apparently, suspected nothing of it. But it was a disloyalty that spoke loud in the ears of the Lord ; He heard it plain in their hearts before it was even a word on their tongues. And He himself answered it.

“ Now Moses ” — the record says, — “ was very meek, above all the men upon the face of the earth.”

In the commonly understood meaning of the word, Moses was *not* “ meek.” He was quick to resent injustice and disobedience : witness his smiting of the Egyptian taskmaster ; witness his anger and his dashing down of the tables of the violated Law at his coming down from Sinai among the idolaters. Neither had he any shy self-distrust. He had no hesitancy in putting himself forward when his place was forward ; he had no doubt of his call to the forward place. But he was grandly self-forgetful ; too self-effaced to be falsely modest, or afraid. He was not abashed before the Lord upon Mount Sinai ; he was not cowed by the reproaches or rebellions of the hosts whom he had to control. He simply moved so in the strength of the Lord, so spoke in the utterance of his commandment, that his own personality was lost in the higher dignity of

his office. It disappeared in a Divine glory. He wist not that his face shone.

“Thus saith the Lord, with whom I have talked face to face for you;” that was his commission and credential. Aaron and Miriam, standing a little farther down, saw their brother as they saw themselves, in a separate, human individuality; a man visited of God, and so great among his fellows. They could not conceive of him, nor have conceived of themselves, as absorbed, discharged of self, by the possession of the Supreme Spirit. Neither on the Mountain of the Law, nor on the Mountain of Transfiguration, could they have stood beside him; because they could not so lose and abnegate themselves as to perceive pure Deity, or be transfigured into the Lord’s likeness at His appearing. They could not, as to their selfhood, be “put into a clift of the rock, and covered with God’s hand as He passed by.”

But as the voice of their hearts had come to the ear of the Lord, so his voice in answer made itself heard in their ears and understandings. Truly they were prophets also, and to them the word of the Lord should be spoken; of conviction to their reason, of

rebuke to the jealous, self-seeking in their souls.

“In the pillar of the cloud” — “in the door of the tabernacle” — came the Presence, and the summons sounded forth: —

“Come out, ye three; hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak *unto* him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. *With* him will I speak mouth to mouth, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

That is all the written story of it; the word and the visitation came. *Somehow*, they knew — “suddenly” — the mind of the Almighty; and their own thought shrank away and perished before the reproof of his anger that “was kindled against them.” In their souls they felt the condemnation and the scorch; what matter the sound or the sight by which the accusal and chastisement were conveyed? Doubtless the souls that are mainly true — that have really at all received the vision — are sooner convicted and deeper humbled than the unenlightened can be. It is they who

have believed, and seen, and heard, who know at once when the Lord "comes down in the pillar of the cloud, and stands before the door of the tabernacle," as He is wont to come and stand; and it is they who hear their own names, when like Aaron and Miriam they are called of Him to come forth. The word that He hath already spoken to them judgeth them in that day.

And Aaron and Miriam were judged, while Moses spoke not a word. Perhaps brought simply face to face with him in the Cloud-Presence that rested about the three, it was sufficient. Treason confesses itself before the calm eyes of righteous power. They were convinced of their sin; they knew that the displeasure of the Lord was upon them. "The cloud departed from off the tabernacle;" and when Aaron looked upon Miriam, lo, "she was leprous, white as snow."

The same thing had happened to her that happened to Moses long ago, when he had put his hand, that had held the rod of the power of God, into his own bosom.

And Aaron prayed unto Moses against the punishment of their sister. "Let her not be as one dead!" he entreated.

“And Moses cried unto the Lord.”

Power, — authority, — to accuse or to justify, — these he assumed not. The Lord was ever behind his act; his own word was simply a message. Only once do we ever find him speaking as from himself; that was afterward, at the rock of Kadesh, in a moment of unguarded anger; and for that he humbly received the instant rebuke and sentence of his God, as unquestioningly as if it had been given through his soul and lips for any other sinning Israelite. He accepted the eternal working of truth and justice into his own life as uncompromisingly, as wholly, without resistance or remonstrance, as for Aaron or Miriam, for Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Indeed, for others he would intercede; beg himself off he never would.

Now, he prayed for Miriam.

“Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee!”

But the Lord commanded her to be shut out for the seven days of uncleanness, and after that to be received again. So she was shut out from the camp for seven days; and her people waited for her, and moved not from the place until she was restored.

Sin; penalty, in the divine order; restoration, in the same order. They learned, proved,

believed all that. And they learned, proved and believed the might of loving human intercession that prevails with the merciful human heart of God.

After this, came the sending forward of the spies into the Promised Land, which the Children of Israel had almost reached, touching in their northward approach its very borders. And then came fear, distrust, complaining, rebellion again.

They had found that lovely country of southern Palestine very good ; they had gathered and brought back in trophy the great grapes of Eshcol. But they had seen the sons of Anak, and been terrified ; "we were in our own sight as grasshoppers," they said ; "and so we were in their sight." And all the congregation, like spoiled, disappointed children, "lifted up their voice, and cried ; and the people wept that night." And they murmured, as men murmur to this day under their hindrances and denials, and before the hard demands of life.

"Would to God we had stayed in Egypt!
Would to God we had even died on our way!
Let us choose a captain to lead us, and go
back!"

When Caleb and Joshua urged the old, strong faith in God, and the fearless following of Him to the end, the congregation threatened them with stones. It is what unbelief always does. It seizes the hard, stolid facts, and hurls them at the heads of those who declare "the Lord is with us;" so that in the soul of any Moses who still sees the glory, the voice of God himself seems saying "How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them?"

"I will smite them and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." This word that Moses heard, yet again, in the one chamber of his nature where he abode as on God's side and in God's sympathies, feeling, as he believed, the very indignation of the Lord,—has it not been heard since, over and over again, in the fierce theologies that set the chosen and saved over against the evil and ignorant and rebellious and condemned? "I will destroy them all, and make of you mine inheritance;" have not they who counted themselves on the Lord's side thought that they heard plainly this declaration of his judgment and awarding?

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Have not many of them in complacent content praised God for this "election"?

But Moses, with his tender human heart, that was most truly God's heart in him, prayed against the thought. He reminded God, as it were, of His own long-suffering; he argued as with Him the scoff of the heathen nations if they should behold the promise fail; he pleaded earnestly, "Pardon the great iniquity of this people in the greatness of thy mercy."

Was the conflict of feeling, — the argument, — the entreaty, — really and literally between the mind of Moses and the Mind of God, as for the moment opposed concerning this matter? Or was God's Spirit at work in Moses upon both sides of the question on which hung a national life and the integrity of a Divine Covenant, balancing against national lapse and unworthiness and the just indignation of an insulted Holiness and Goodness? Were God's own Reason and Mercy convincing and persuading his disheartened and offended minister to His own patient, forbearing steadfastness in behalf of His weak children, — prevailing with him to a new faith, a generous, enduring hope, a mighty persistence for Israel rather than a desperate

breaking-off and abandonment, and an impetuous resolve to take upon himself, single-handed, the work and purpose of the Lord, trusting to Jehovah to make his everlasting promise good, even by the raising up of a new nation in his prophet's own posterity?

Did not the Faith of Moses struggle, possibly, in the strength and help of the Lord, through this wrench of disappointment, this humiliation for his people's sin, and hopelessness through their forfeiture, to a new expansion, a broader light, a higher grasp than ever of the eternal and invincible good-will of God? Have we not, in the result and showing of this experience, another article in the grand Belief of Moses? Did he not apprehend, and trust, after all, with a firm confidence, that "God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of his truth"?

Nevertheless, there had to be the interval of loss. God will not even pardon in the hurry that negatives the splendor of his righteousness. "I have pardoned according to thy word," He says to Moses, "but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Nothing less than this shall be my salvation. There shall be no partial favor, nor sparing. I will save you Hebrew people, that all people may be saved. I am leading you, that all peoples may at last be led. I will not indulge you in your cowardice and rebellions ; I will only bring you into the land, and I will only glorify the whole earth, with my absolute righteousness, in you and for you, and for all men, which is my glory. And this, as I live, shall come to pass. Therefore, depart again from these very borders of your almost obtained possession in my name. These men who have seen my glory and have not believed, shall not come into this Canaan. They shall perish in this wilderness.

So God's anger and his mercy spoke with each other in the inward hearing of Moses. So they revealed themselves to his spiritual perception.

"Very well," do you say ? "That was how Moses saw things. That is all you can prove ; and it proves nothing beyond itself, — that Moses thought so. Suppose we, to-day, do not see and think in precisely such fashion ? Are we over-ruled by Moses ? Are our own persuasions of no account ?"

Possibly not ; possibly yes, in their own degree. That was Aaron and Miriam's question. All depends upon what we call persuasion. Persuasion is a through and through, positive thing. It must needs be *of somewhat*. It can scarcely be of a negative. If a man reckons it a persuasion, when he only thinks himself persuaded that there is nothing to be persuaded about, he simply has no witness to bring. Moses had. And it is of *testimony* that we are considering.

But again may not a man, through obliquity or partiality of understanding, be persuaded of a mistake ? Undoubtedly. Here comes in the qualification for witness. And we have the test right here.

“ *My servant* Moses is not so,” — a prophet of dreams and visions only, — “ *who is faithful in all my house.*”

“ He that doeth the will, shall know of the doctrine.”

“ We speak that we do know, and testify that which we have seen.”

Verily, the transplendence of the New Testament lightens all through the literal story of the Old. He that doeth always the things that please the Father, hath the revelation and

the authority from the Father. He is the Sent unto men ; he is Lawgiver and Intercessor.

The stories of the Old Scripture concerning calling, obedience, and inheritance of promise, — or of disloyalty, perversion, forfeiture, — are the parables of history which are one with, and repeated in, the spiritual parables of the New. Read after this narration of the self-seeking of Miriam and Aaron, and their punishment in the forbiddance to their entering into the Promised Land, the teaching of our Lord concerning the heavenly marriage of things and spirit, — of act and life, — to which God bids his children in the sonship, and to which they refuse to come, seeking each his own, and the fancied getting of his own, rather than the beautiful, great Will of God, and his preparing for them.

“The King prepared a marriage for his son.” A uniting of life and circumstance with love and spiritual understanding ; of the outward with the inward, which is perfect life, and the place and condition of it, to which his Providence continually leads us. The Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, with life and sweetness and satisfying of the

whole nature of men created in the image of their God, human and divine, is only reached by faithful following ; by a coming to the call, a ready answer to the bidding ; which, "if we will hear his voice," is always "*Now.*"

In the creation of things, and the gift of spirit, God prepared this marriage festival for the two, which, made one, should be a perpetual rejoicing. But his children would not see ; would not care for the grand whole ; would be engrossed with the little, tangible thing of the moment, — the pair of oxen, the bit of land, yes, even the wife, taking her as a mere earthly good, and for companionship in the material ; not comprehending the full, true gift in anything. So the early generations of men refused and lost their sonship ; slighted the great Bidding ; went astray after their own small imaginations and covetous inventions. And God took his bidding back.

He changed it. Still He sent forth his angels — of birth and welcome into his earth, the beginning of his Kingdom — of material ministering and sustaining, — and the world — of life — was full ; "the wedding was furnished with guests, both bad and good."

Now follows what in the parable, to careless reading, seems almost like a harsh injustice. He had "compelled" them in (how often we hear a man say, "I did not ask to be born"!); and his house was full, of wild, ignorant, untutored human creatures, — in the mass, and each one also, both bad and good.

He comes and speaks to one — of many — who has not on the wedding garment. He calls him "friend."

He asks the poor, bad, unapparelled human soul, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" And the soul has nothing to say. Not even, "I was compelled hither." For the first time, his want condemns him. He sees he is not fit to be there at all, in the King's House.

What does the condemnation mean? We learn elsewhere. "This is the condemnation, that they *love* darkness rather than light."

"Bind him, hand and foot," — in the body and the bodily life, — "and cast him" — let him loose — "into the *outer* darkness. There shall be" — there in the willful darkness there *must* be — "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

It means nothing less than the word of God

— in all patience, in all *compassion*, — for He waits and suffers with us — to the misled world: “Go and learn. Ye are all called, but ye are not all yet chosen. Ye have not yet chosen Me. Go into the outside life of darkness that you have made, and learn your need of light. Only then can the light come, which is none the less waiting, even at the heart of the very darkness.”

It means nothing less than the very meaning of all the travail of this present evil world, that would have its own blind way; nothing less than the eternal answer to the awful question about good and evil. Evil is the putting off of good. It is the seizing of the little and low, to the exclusion of the large and high. The good waits till the evil has done with itself, and is self-rejected.

Aaron and Miriam were not to enter into the Promised Land. The heads of the tribes that were sent up to see the land were never to come in and dwell there. They were still to serve and follow in the wilderness, accepting penalty and delay. They were to die in their long wandering, and leave their bodies in the desert. The seven days in which Miriam was shut out from the camp were the days of

her purification. The forty years of patient pilgrimage and penance were the purification of the tribes. These things were types of all shutting out from an immediate Canaan of mere pleasantness, while men are purged and made ready for the final entering in to the eternal satisfying; to the Marriage Supper of the joined Earth and Heaven; the Redemption, which is the Manifestation of the One Will done in both forever.

Up and down the wild, barren Arabian stretches of desert and mountain wilderness, which, after all, only measured from south to north a fourteen days' journey direct from Sinai to Palestine, the Hebrew people wandered and encamped, leading their nomadic life for forty years longer. What was it all most like but the drifting of our human experience up and down the earth and along the ages of it, between the first Giving of the Commandments of Life and the entering into its full fruition? With the very heaven almost within our reach — with only such a little distance between the Bidding and the Reward, if we would follow the direct way — we wind and tangle our paths in a blind bewilderment;

we make our long tarryings in a few scanty feeding-places ; we grow old and pass away without ever having come to the full faith of the heavenly nearness, to the sure, realizing vision of the glory that waits close by. It is like being lost in storm and darkness, toiling exhausted up and down within short step and call of one's own door, and perishing in the night at the threshold of one's home.

The Israelites were seized with a pang of compunction for their own folly, — a conviction of their own loss. How much of it was pure repentance seems very doubtful. Perhaps even then, if there had been repentance enough, there might have been remission and restoration enough. "We have sinned," they said. "But we are here, and we *will* go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised."

We *will* obey ; we will dare the giants ; we will conquer and inherit ! It was like the spoiled child's cry, in very tempest of rage and resistance, "I *will* be good ! Give me the thing you meant to give me, and have taken from me !"

But that is not the repentance which pre-

vails. "They presumed to go up into the hill-top; nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."

The intervening time, after that driving back, was a time of teaching. The signs and ordinances were given; the atonements and the punishments were declared. The burnt offerings — the endurance and yielding of sacrifice — and the glad free-will offerings, were instituted; the beautiful reminders of the fringed borders of their garments, and the ribband hem of blue, were appointed, to be a remembrance of all the commandments of the Lord and a sign of their loyalty to them; garments being that clothing of life in the externals of daily living, which, to its last details — its every separate thread as in a fringe, and in the color of the heavenly that should rest upon and mark it — was to be made "holy unto their God." For, the word of the ordering ends, in the fifteenth chapter of Numbers, "I am the Lord your God, which brought you

out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: *I am the Lord your God.*"

Yes, even in the punishment, the discipline, the putting off. Even in the wilderness of the waiting, and the hard, slow learning.

"Though I make my bed in hell, He is there also."

In all these things, "the Lord spake unto Moses, and Moses unto the Children of Israel." In all these things, in the very heart of Moses, as well as in his utterance to the people, the authority, the claim, was not that of any man, or of any human assertion. It was that of the "Thus saith the Lord." And the credential, given of God himself concerning his representative, was the one warrant, upon the only basis and condition, "*This man is my servant; faithful in all my house.*"

Like unto this was the yet more intimately divine commission and authority announced at the Jordan, when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven like a dove and rested upon the Son of Man. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him."

It was all the claim of Christ himself. "I do nothing of myself: He that sent me is

with me: the Father hath not left me alone :
for I do always the things that please Him.
Which of you convinceth me of sin? The
works that I do bear witness of me. If I do
not the works of my Father, believe me not.
But if I do, believe the works." And this, in
order that "ye may know and believe" the
great truth of God's Life in his Humanity,
— "that the Father is in me, and I in Him!"

CHAPTER XV

THE REVOLT OF KORAH

It was in the time of this training of the wilderness life that the last desperate rebellion and presumption arose, and was fearfully punished.

And here we come to the inquiry as to what Moses believed, and leads us to believe, about Divine Judgment and Chastisement.

Keeping in mind always that what we are after is the interior faith, whatever may or may not have been the outer fact or event, we come face to face, at this next point of the history, with the whole great question of what are the direct and personal judgments of God upon transgression and evil life. The evidence of Moses as lawgiver, interpreter, prophet, sharer in spirit of the counsel of the Almighty, is of extreme consequence, let the story of his agency, under such faith as moved him steadfastly, be what it may.

Moses certainly believed that all things are

of the Will of God. Whether we in our later time have so advanced upon Moses as to have gotten beyond the Will of God, is the question of to-day which assails the positions of faith and compels her to the reconstruction of all her lines.

Does God have his way in the whirlwind and the storm; are the clouds the dust of his feet as He presses on to his purpose; or have whirlwind and storm broken loose, in the strength of their committed law, from the immediate Divine Intent, and are men subject and accountable to the elements only, behind which is no Heart with a present, personal love, no instant Thought of Fatherly care, no Righteousness ordaining and controlling, through the causes and processes, that which happens in the probative, formative experience of mankind upon this little planet of the Lord's — or indeed is it the Lord's — making?

It seems as if it might be worth while to leave all the detail of cause and effect, to forget for a little the chemistries, geologies, biologies, and atmospheric forces, and our own latest sagacities about them, and see what significance we can find in the simplicity of the attitude and act of a man who took things at

fountain head and at first hand, before God had so far fulfilled his gradual revelation to his children as to show them in part his wonderful handling of his creation, and so expand their understandings with his supreme reasons and methods in the course of things, that they might be able, at last, to "comprehend, with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the *love* which passeth *knowledge*, and be filled with all the fullness of God."

If this is begging the question, Saint Paul begged it grandly for the Ephesians and for us, when he stood between the knowledges of the Old and the New, and answered magnificently beforehand the very scoffs and doubts of a half-comprehension to which this nineteenth century has attained, and in which it halts, dazzled with itself, and bewildered by the vastness not yet penetrated, saying, "This must needs be all. The mind of man can no farther go." If the mind of man were to be the final measure, this would be the conclusion assuredly; but we have, beyond, the mind of God. And God is giving us an all-round education.

Is it quite impossible to conceive that in the earlier time, — when the thing for men to

learn first of all and inclusively was that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and that "He ruleth by his power, forever," — cause and effect may have been set in closer, swifter, visible connection, and time and event been brought in both spiritual and physical conjunction, so that a sin and its consequence may have been shown in illustrated relation, in such manner that the history should stand for a sign to the generations? It seems at least that Moses believed in this order and sure connection; and that he so relied upon its truth in the dealing of the Almighty, that when sin raged openly and rebellion became defiant, he expected the natural convulsion to follow, and dared in the sublime courage of his conviction to say the word before the people which he heard inwardly from the Lord, and to invoke and command, in the Eternal Name, the Eternal Justice. Is it so strange a thing to human nature to cry out, even now, from a depth below its paralysis of deadened credence, "Why does not the earth open, and swallow up this corruption, — these horrors of evil-doing and the evildoers?"

Moses does not ask "Why not?" but declares that it will come to pass; and appar-

ently it did. If we must have an exhaustive rational philosophy for every happening, leaving God no choice in ordering, need we find it difficult to conceive a law which we often admit is mysteriously indicated, between spiritual and moral insanities and excitements, and manifest disturbance in outward nature? Crimes and disasters seem epidemic and coincident; the lesson of the revolt and destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram is more than hinted again in the juxtapositions of modern ferment and outrage and presumptions with correspondent awfulness of human slaughter and agonies. They, indeed, upon whom the tower of Siloam falls are not sinners above all; nevertheless, without repentance, men shall always likewise perish. The natural shall suffer the wrath of the natural; the sowing to the flesh shall have the reaping of corruption.

It was the Spirit of the Holy against which Korah and his compeers rebelled. "Ye take too much upon you," they said to their spiritual leaders. "All the congregation are holy; every one of them; the Lord is among them; wherefore lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" They could not recognize the lifting up that was of the Lord.

They fell back upon the general truth, as men do now, that the Lord shuts no one out; that He is present to all, reveals himself to all; and so they would have nothing of degrees, or of appointment; they wanted neither leading nor help; they would not be commanded. They flung aside the vital argument and evidence that the more they were of the Lord, the more surely they would recognize his messages; the more intuitively they would yield to the larger inspiration, through whomsoever it might come.

"Our faith is as good as yours; we are not bound to your opinions or declarations; we are able to think for ourselves," very often means, when traced and sifted to its motive centre, "We will have no more faith than we like; we will think, or not think, as we please." It is the escape into irresponsibility; it is taking refuge from the special in the catholic; from the personal in the vague. "God is with us all; with one as much as another; therefore as individuals we need not trouble ourselves."

"When Moses heard it, he fell upon his face." Down, — prone upon the earth, he went; overwhelmed with the abasement of his

brethren ; overwhelmed with the failure of his long labor with them. He threw himself as at the footstool of the Almighty, in penitence for them ; in a despairing indignation also ; in a shame of hopelessness and defeat.

What did God say to him, lying there ? What did the troubled earth itself, perhaps, murmur in his ear ? Did some premonition of the coming earthquake thrill him as he lay ; and did God at the same moment utter in his soul of prophecy, " Fear not ; I will judge for my chosen " ?

How long it was before he stood upon his feet again, and " spake unto Korah and unto all his company," the text does not narrate. That awful, silent interview with his God, and with God's majestic force in nature, is as secret as the audiences on Mount Sinai. It is all left in the little blank between the fourth and fifth verses of that strange chapter of visitations. But what he said when he did rise and look upon them was this : —

" Even to-morrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who are holy ; and will cause him to come near unto him ; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him."

Must there not have been a solemn light

upon his face, an ineffable vibration in his voice, as the words were uttered ?

“This do ” was his grand, calm ordering. “Take your censers, Korah and all his company ; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord to-morrow ; and it shall be that the man whom the Lord shall choose, he shall be holy. *Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.*”

Their own words, weighted with a stern, grave fitness of rebuke, he turned back upon them.

“It is he whom the Lord doth choose.” It is not the man who presumeth, and chooseth himself. Wait upon the Lord ; offer Him your fire and incense ; see what He will do with it ; and see whom the Lord will have, to receive his word, and to do his bidding. He will not let you mistake, if you seek Him, and not yourselves. Ye have already been chosen, to do your part.

“Is it a small thing that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them ? Seek ye the priesthood also ? ”

Moses believed, with his whole soul, that disobedience to God is discontinuity of his plan for us. That only some convulsion of life can re-locate the broken lines, and restore to the path of righteous law the beneficent working of his purpose. The people of Israel were living in the midst of mystery and sign; in the close, awful manifesting of the correspondence of the natural with the spiritual. There are such periods in the dealings of God with men. The nearer the two realms come to conjunction at any crisis of earth history, the more apparent is the intimate, mysterious relation and interaction of the moral and the physical. It was so in the dispensation of the Exodus; it was so every here and there in the experience of the Hebrews, when their prophets and kings lived and worked contemporaneously. It was so in the time of Christ's coming into the earthly. Saint John tells us with tremendous power how it shall be when the Son of Man shall appear at last in full revelation of God; when the two kingdoms of form and spirit — of life and its embodied operation — shall be absolutely conjoined, in the Eternal Truth and in its instant evidence. It is the angel standing with one foot on the

sea and the other upon the land, — touching alike the tangible and the intangible.

This way it was that Moses stood, from the beginning of his mission when he put his shoes from off his feet, baring himself of common insulation in things of sense, to receive and interpret through all the visible the vast realities and meanings of the invisible. With one hand upon the rod of Almighty Power, and the other holding his brethren in human sympathy, he was simply God's channel for reaching down into the daily consciousness of a certain family of his children, chosen for the experience, such communication of his continual relation with the souls and lives of men, and the unity of his thought and act with them, as should send down to all posterity an instance and reminder, overliving all intervals of darkness and doubt, and pointing through waiting ages to a consummation in which the Lord's tabernacle shall be with men forever, the government upon his shoulder, and the whole earth filled with the knowledge of his power and presence, the acknowledgment of his rule and righteousness, in every least and greatest thing.

If we take this high, strong ground of essen-

tial faith, we shall find no very disturbing unlikelihood in any marked, occasional coincidence between moral and physical event. Nearly or remotely we shall recognize such law and connection as irrefragable ; we shall feel as Moses felt, when his whole spirit was intense with deeply apprehensive sorrow for the blind dereliction of his brethren, and keenly open to the premonitions of the disaster it must bring. We shall not find it hard to suppose that his bodily senses, strung to a corresponding acuteness, were able to perceive the approach of the concomitant external catastrophe ; and we may feel that he could know better than we may know, how much and surely the one thing had to do with the other ; that he could at least, at that immediate juncture, forefeel and have presentiment — with sure prophetic instinct far beyond the feebler hint we call presentiment — of how awfully the one might be about to answer with its sign to the other, and declare, through their mysterious correlation, its tremendous judgment. The bolt strikes where the conditions concur. Possibly we know more of terrestrial causes and operations than Moses knew ; but do we stand closer to the celestial ? And from which side may the

more searching and inclusive perception and evidence come?

Are such interpretations "fine-drawn," "far-fetched"? Very well; so are the insights and out-sights of microscope and telescope; yet we delight in confessing to their revelations. No matter how far off, or how far in, a thing may be, since it is *there*, and we can find it.

The sin was there; the earthquake was there; the solemn warning and prophecy were uttered between them. Was it a jumbled, accidental juxtaposition, a rushing together of things in pure confusion, — or were the calm, strong, ordering Will of God, and the hand of his unabdicated Power, as manifest in the sequence and logic of the event as we should suppose such Will and Power, once established, and acting through particulars to generals, and from vast generals to wonderful minute particulars, would continue to be? If the Will and Power were not there, what was, and where are they? And how much of God's own work in the universe is done behind his back?

In the strong sense of his belief, and in his steadfast looking to the Lord for His own

token of judgment, — not vengeance, for whatever the unswerving law of God may do, it can but be the mighty operation of his truth, and the *justifying* of all question and perplexity between right and wrong, — Moses called the rebellious leaders to him, and commanded them with a summons before the Lord. “Be thou,” he said to Korah, — for the other men had refused to come up, — “be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow; and take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer.”

And they did as Moses said. Rebels as they were, they dared not yet in act rebel. They could murmur and accuse before the man Moses; but when the man was filled with the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, it was Jehovah’s own look that blazed upon them through his servant’s eyes; it was the voice of Almightiness that commanded by his lips.

Each man took his censer, — who shall say with what misgivings and secret shakings of evil purpose? — and Korah gathered them all,

in the way of their wont, before the door of the tabernacle, where Moses and Aaron stood augustly, reverently, waiting.

“And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation.”

Out of the shining of the Excellent Glory came a word to Moses and to Aaron. They were in the exaltation of the Spirit, and they heard things which man may no otherwise hear. They were not afraid. They were waiting, serenely, to see what God would do. They believed surely that He would do something. He always had. They brought all their questions to Him for his decision. They neither ruled nor governed in their own names. “See what the Lord will shew,” said they to the people.

Whatever premonition of awfulness in the showing might have been in them, they thought not of any safety to themselves, any choosing of securer place. The Lord knew his own; the Lord would judge, and make manifest. Is there anything like the sublimity of this faith now living and acting among men of power? Does any man invoke God’s righteousness and the declaration of his truth in the affairs of nations, and stand up in his might, waiting

for that which He will say? And yet the Lord has not departed from the earth.

“Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”

To what in Moses and Aaron did this inspiration of warning appeal,—making suggestion of sparing them only, and of sending swift, consuming wrath upon the whole unruly host? Was it a word of test, showing them what their own hasty, uncompromising indignation might have been, and how a human wrath might deal with sin, if it could handle the weapons of Omnipotence?

Again Moses turned from personal feeling and took share with God himself. Again he fell upon his face, and with God “repented him” of the evil that would not yet repent of itself. Again he took side not with the anger, but with the mercy of the Lord.

“O God, the God of the *spirits* of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with the whole congregation?”

It is in the prayers He gives men to pray that the Lord reveals his intent, larger than their first fear or appealing.

“Speak unto the congregation,” the answer

came, commanding Moses and Aaron. Give them all the warning I have given you. "Say, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

It was the demand again, "Who is on the Lord's side this day?"

And Moses and the elders went over to where Dathan and Abiram were, and from the doors of their tents turned to the people.

And Moses said, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." "*Sins*," take notice, was the word,—not *punishment*.

So in the yet untroubled light of the clear day, while there was no threat in the air, the congregation divided itself slowly away, and left the three chiefs, with their wives and their families, standing before their open tabernacles.

And Moses, borne away by the Spirit in him, having returned, we may suppose, to his own place, at the door of the Lord's tent, spake with a terrible investment of authority. Slow of speech he was, and the weighty sentences must have fallen from his lips with an awful deliberation.

“Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works. They are not of my own mind.

“If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men ; then the Lord hath not sent me.

“But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into the pit ; *then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.*”

More slowly still must those last solemnly accusing and condemning words have come, as Moses stood in the environing Light of the Great Presence before the tent of his congregation ; and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram remained apart, motionless, silent, as men deaf, dazed, confounded, not comprehending the tongue in which their Prophet spake, nor seeing the vision that he saw ; not knowing, indeed, if they had understood, which way to turn, or where the danger might strike, if any were to befall.

A brief, breathless pause, — a human hush and a hush of nature that had doubtless been slowly creeping over all things, as it does be-

fore a dreadful voice or convulsion of nature comes, — and then, the rolling, the upheaval, the opening chasm, the forth-leaping fire, — and in the rending shock and reeling confusion, while “all Israel fled” further and further into the wilderness, Korah and all his followers, their families, their homes, their goods, went down, perished, and disappeared from among the host of their kins-people forever.

Does this seem like fable?

If it be fable, what yet more tremendous reality does it stand for?

The sure dealing of God with sin — the absolute destruction of evil, with whatever it may involve — was at any rate a vital point in the Belief of Moses.

Was Moses a deluded man, or a deluder? Or were the truth and the power of God manifest in him?

Centuries later, the Christ of Nazareth bore witness, in direct word, and in parable, to the Former Testimony.

“I have not come to destroy the Law or the Prophecy, but to fulfil.”

“Ye have Moses, and the prophets; if ye believe not them, neither would ye believe though one rose from the dead.”

Is Moses obsolete? Then is Christianity obsolete, and of no effect; and the word of the Lord is come to pass, and the rising from the dead also has been in vain.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BUDDEROD

A SWIFT plague among the rebel hosts followed the destruction of Korah and his immediate fellow conspirators. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred were swept away. These are awful numbers. We stand aghast at catastrophes in our day, of fire and flood, crash and explosion, when hundreds perish; we can hardly take into our imagination the devastations in far lands, by earthquake or rushing overflow, or pestilence, when whole regions of country are depopulated. And yet these things do happen. The Lord seems to account nothing of earthly existence or human suffering, when He stretches forth his hand, — or permits the tremendous operation of his Law — whichever way may be chosen to express the working of his Will and Method, — to purge, and purge, and do away the evils out of his earth, and make great, new departures in it.

Concentrated in a history of forty years of desert life and wandering, in the experience of a people of twelve great families held marvelously together in a nationality that survived exile, oppression, deprivation, weariness, disheartenment, homelessness, — all the forces of a divine control and compulsion illustrated themselves as in an intense, representative rush of event; gathering to a focal point of time within the memory of children born in Egypt and surviving to reach Canaan, an awful, beautiful showing and sequence of Omnipotent purpose and dealing with men through the disciplines and providings of their life-sojourn between the dim, low, unevolved Past of their being and the glorious fulfillment in the Land that Is to Be.

For what said Ezekiel, when long after, in the Babylonian captivity, he told over to Israel, as with the voice of the Lord, the story of this dealing and “leading” in the wilderness? What meaning, speaking by Divine command, and instant inspiration, did he make of it?

“As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. . . . and I will bring you into the wilder-

ness of the people, and there will I *plead*" — mark the word — "with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God."

The word is reiterated. To "plead" is to "entreat;" to "entreat" is both to "manage" and to "beseech," — to "draw" toward an end. All God's management, or dealing, is an entreating, a beseeching: a drawing of men unto their best and only real good, in himself.

"And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me. . . . For in mine holy mountain, *in the mountain of the height of Israel*, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel serve me: there will I accept them. . . . I will accept *you*" (the speech changes tenderly here into the second person) "with your sweet savour, . . . and I will be sanctified in you. . . . And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And then shall ye remember your

ways, and all your doings, . . . and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

And then comes the prophecy of the devouring flame which "all flesh shall see that the Lord hath kindled;" the "flaming flame" from the south unto the north that "shall not be quenched" till all is burned away that the Lord will have burned away.

"Ah, Lord God!" cries Ezekiel, "they say of me, Doth he not speak in parables?"

How else, in phrase or event, has the word of the Lord ever been spoken?

Did not David, rehearsing in his seventy-eighth Psalm the whole story of that old wrath of God "against the disobedient and rebellious," when He "smote down the chosen men of Israel," and "slew them until they sought him, . . . and remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer," — did not David begin, "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter *dark sayings* of old

which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us " ?

"For," he goes on presently, "He" (the Lord) "*established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them: . . . that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*"

And then, from the dividing of the Red Sea, through all the giving, and leading, and restraining, and punishing, and bringing in to the inheritance; through the backslidings and provocations and idolatries even there, where He established them; through the captivities, the judgments of sword and fire, to the fresh smiting of their enemies, and the choosing of the tribe of Judah; to the calling of David from feeding the ewes to the shepherding and feeding of the Lord's people,—the Psalm chants on the chronicle, to the summing up, in one sweet striking of the sure keynote of all; the one solution and reconciling of both mercy and judgment: —

"So He fed them according to the integrity

of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands."

How should it not be a parable? And how should not the Lord's Love in it be a Consuming Fire?

It was just after all this terror and desolation, — after Aaron, bearing fire from the altar in his censer, had stood between the living and the dead till the plague was stayed, — that another parable — a gentle one, a sign of beauty, yet carrying with it the supreme declaration of Almighty Will, and an absolute quenching of murmurs and querulous discontents — was shown, in simple object lesson, to the congregation.

"Let every one of the princes of Israel, according to the twelve tribes, bring his rod," was the command that came to Moses; "and write thou every man's name upon his rod; and lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you."

And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and their princes came, and brought each his rod, the sign of his rule, as they were bidden; "and the rod of Aaron was among their rods."

Whose sceptre shall rule? And by what right is the rule given?

The whole question of authority in human affairs was under test. Priesthood, or kingdom, or any leadership, — what is to give real claim or commission in either? What shall be the seal and token of divine right? Is it birth? Is it the might of the strong? Is it craft and cunning wisdom, that which we have learned to call *diplomacy*, from doubleness?

It is something that the Lord himself will show; that He has shown in all history, when the need, and the hour, and the man, converging along the lines of a sure ordination, arrive together.

It is something which has the Divine in it; no dead dynastic authority; no ecclesiastical election or imposition; no grasp of self-will, or any plot, or state-stroke; but a living reality, which asserts itself by life; which puts forth from within its beautiful, fitting purpose.

It is a short story, this of the laying up of the twelve rods, and what came of it; it is told in only nine verses of a chapter in the Book of Numbers. This is the end of it: —

“Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

“ And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness ; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

“ And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel ; and they looked, and took every man his rod.”

There was neither demur, nor appeal. Dead sticks were they all, save one ; and each man took his own dead thing and went away.

But Aaron’s rod, alive from the Lord, and consecrate to Him, was laid up again before the testimony, for a token ; that the people might no more murmur nor dispute, *lest so doing they should die*. For God is not willing that any man should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth. It is the truth that judgeth them ; that saveth also, in the end.

It is long before men learn that ; that the very judgment is salvation. The Israelites, smitten, scared, trembling, seeing the unwaivering Justice in which they were held, cried still unto Moses, —

“ Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.

Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die : shall we be consumed with dying ? ”

The Budder Rod has told us its inner, true, lovely story. Must we go back, — shutting our inward sense and vision of its truth, — and with our blind *common* sense argue the material side of it? To accept God's Why, must we always stipulate with Him that we shall compass his How? Must we prove the process of his teaching by our own comprehension? To comprehend, — to get all round a fact or act, — is an altogether different thing from understanding it. The very word *understand* implies an attitude of humble faith, a reception from above ourselves, through signs beyond our own powers. Yet undoubtedly we may satisfy our minds in this attitude, by some argument of rationality that shall meet the cavil which stops short in ignorant refusal; and calls itself reason. We may go deeper into the infinite reason than the feeble investigation which stops at what seems to its first touch a hard surface of circumstance.

Let us look at this happening, then, in the relation it holds to the faith of a great na-

tion, to the spiritual certainties of a great soul. For it is the Intuition of Reality, and Belief that comes of it, that we are searching for and tracing out.

How came Moses and the Israelites to believe this?

Something happened, which shut the murmuring lips of the disaffected chiefs. Something beyond their cavil or dispute; a thing to which they yielded instantly, as to a sign from heaven. And this recorded thing is not a piece of myth, or a fabrication invented in an after day, and loosely circulated in the world like other fable. It was a thing of which the token was kept sacredly, from the moment on; the live tradition of which passed down from father to son, a part of a positive inheritance; a trust in their hearts and hands as from the Most High.

Some one has answered to the question, "Where is the proof of Christianity?" "*The Jews.*" The Jews, to this day, prove Christ and the Bible. Scattered, but not perished, they endure, a separate people, to hold the Testimonies. They are themselves the living and authentic record of their Belief.

And their Belief is more than they. It

holds what they have not even yet confessed to, nor understood; the central declaration of the Personal Christ, — the Divine-Human Presence, the Jehovah-Angel, who had been always with them, — and the fulfilling attestation of his Coming in the Flesh. By the witness of their Seers, God had already “set his king upon his holy hill of Zion,” while Judah was yet a nation and a realm; and while yet her thousands filled the land, his open manifestation was to be.

“*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*”

“Thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little *among the thousands of Judah*, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*”

But this something that truly happened as to Aaron's rod, — the memory and sign of which, yet vital and sacredly laid up among the Hebrew people, bear evidence of a convincing proof to them, — was it just what it seemed to be, or have the Jews believed, in

this and in other matters, what nobody else can literally and rationally accept? Was the Budding of the Rod, perhaps, a piece of Oriental jugglery? Was Moses a pious trickster?

What, then, was or is "Oriental jugglery"? For that also survives, and is in the first place to be explained, before we sneer it — or anything we choose to class with it — away. Has wise, modern, Occidental literalism ever found out its secret, or determined its method?

There were magicians in Egypt in the time of Moses; there were casters-out of devils in Israel in the time of Christ; there are Indian wonder-workers in the East to-day.

And what about it all? Ah, here we are in the mystery at once. The Occult is in everything. Everything is occult. Men stumble against great secrets, and get from some unknown live wire a strong, sudden thrill; from some hidden cause a marvelous result; and then they go to work, and rightly, with slow, careful Science, to trace relation, to experiment, to compare, and by earnest, laborious process to demonstrate and declare law after law. Have they ever got the *whole*, — the inclusive central Principle and Power? They come so near that we are awed, — half terrified; we cry

with the Israelites, "Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die!" And in our daring, our tampering with sense divorced from spirit, we are in danger of some terrible perishing. Our blindness, our peril, is just this: we catch the skirts of Mystery, but we do not see her outstretched hands. We do not let her lift us to herself, and make us one with her. The difference between jugglery or magic, and miracle in God's name, is precisely here. Jesus Christ asserted it when he turned back the blasphemy of the Pharisees upon themselves, with the demand, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?" He recognized the fact that wonders were wrought, even by the very unknown Power of God, without any oneness with the Spirit of God. Is that the way we are inventing and contriving now, and glorifying ourselves with our half knowledge, when the full flood of light and power only waits the confession of faith to be poured upon our uplifted and rejoicing humanity? "*But if I,*" Jesus Christ goes on, in an ineffable majesty of utterance, "*with the Finger of God* cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you."

Jugglery, Occultism, Science, — call it what you will, — touches Reality; feels that it is, draws from it some partial signs, and thinks itself conquering and possessing the Unseen, the Unfathomable. Faith lays her hand reverently in the Hand of God, and by his permission and command takes power from Him and does his behest among the things of the earthly. Jesus Christ meant something when he said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done." But we have not come to it yet. We have not come to the faith — the might of the spirit — which is the condition. Faith is not temerity, is not self-seeking, is not curious, idle intrusion and tempting, nor rash, wild, ignorant interference. It is not taking the kingdom of heaven by whim, nor by force. Is it yet upon the earth? When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find it awaiting him?

Had Moses a beginning of this faith and its power, or was he a cheat, and a presumer? Must not his life be the answer? And does it not simply offer us the alternative of be-

lieving in a moral impossibility, or in an exceptional natural phenomenon?

See how it was with this man in everything. From the hour when he learned the lesson of his leprous hand, which he drew forth as from the hiding and assumption of its new power in his own bosom, until at Kadesh, where we shall next see him, he stood on God's side and condemned himself for his momentary claim of self-authority, Moses was utterly, uncompromisingly, to his most secret thought, surrendered to the divine ordinance; drawing his very will, and the brave tenacity of it, from the "Thus shalt thou say," — "Thus shalt thou do," — of Jehovah. He, himself, was a Rod in the hand of the Lord. He undertook nothing, planned nothing, contrived no cunning expedient, of his own impulse, or shrewdness, or desire. He simply "fell down before the Lord," and took his command and empowering from Him. He believed in all he did, for he knew he did nothing from himself. In this again was he type of the Son, who "doeth that which he seeth the Father do," and "always the thing that pleaseth Him;" and whom therefore "the Father sheweth all things that himself doeth." Of whom, by his prophet Isaiah, the Almighty One saith: —

“There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth” (the power of his word shall move all things earthly), “and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins” (the restraint and control of his strength), “and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (the binding of his desires).

Is not this, indeed, the Christ, and the full sonship of humanity; when its life and power shall be “laid up” as a rod “in the tabernacle of the Lord,” and shall be found bringing forth buds, and blooming blossoms, and yielding almonds?

CHAPTER XVII

THE TRANSGRESSION AT KADESH

THIRST.

Terrible thirst came upon them again.

The Forty Years were counted. Once more the Israelites were come up to the very borders of Canaan. There, at Kadesh, Miriam died, and was buried.

Aaron and Moses, Caleb and Joshua, remained, the living leaders of the host, to bring it unto its great, glad inheritance. They of the past generation, who sinned, and strove, who reproached God and threatened his chosen ministers with stones, when at the first time they reached this wilderness-border, and stood almost within the boundary of the Promised Land, — who had been turned back into a prolonged desert-wandering for their unworthiness, — had perished gradually by the way, and a new people had grown up. Were they purged of their old faithlessness and rebellion? Were they ready now to follow at the com-

mands of the Lord, and enduring all hardship, resisting and conquering all foes, to march in to this beautiful southern Syria where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had dwelt, and retake it to themselves from the rude, sensual, pagan tribes who had been inhabiting it, to possess it in the name and in the service of the Living God, and make of it a Holy Land?

The pain of thirst came upon them, and they forgot and despised all. They cared not for the great grapes of Eshcol, which were so near if they could only bear a little longer; for the wells and fountains that a short way further on in that south country between Beersheba and the Desert had been found springing forth, or had been digged, by Abraham and by Isaac, and that still poured forth their waters. They just stopped short, in their old, blind, obstinate way, and hankered back through all the forty years of teaching, promise, and probation, after the life of the tribes in Egypt, when their fathers had not been called forth from slavery and dull comfort to the heroism and patience of faith, and the sure fulfillment of the covenant of God. They asked bitterly why they might not rather

have died in the wilderness, with their fathers and brethren, and ended their miseries as they did. Why had they come all this way further, to perish ?

"You have given us nothing," they said to Moses ; but truly the word was spoken blasphemously up to God. "Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place ? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates ; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces ; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them."

The Lord was patient. He was long suffering with their discontents and their shortsightedness ; with their mistaken despair, and their reproach of his goodness.

The same Lord, who in this Land of His spake afterward by his Son, — "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," — who even visited them with brief bodily need to follow it with bodily satisfying, and so show them the perfect type of spiritual famishing and refreshment, — said now unto

Moses, — "Take the rod." "Lay hold of My Power." "Gather the assembly together. Speak to the rock before their eyes. It shall give forth his water. Thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock. So shalt thou give the congregation and their beasts drink."

It was as if He had said, "Behind my hard refusal is the waiting, living good. Believe, challenge it, and call it forth. It shall come to you abundantly."

"And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as the Lord commanded."

But in the impetuosity of his indignation, in a swift, fierce impatience of the unmanageable temper and stolidity of his people, he could not graciously work God's graciousness for them. If God was not angry with them, he was. He took to himself, in the moment of roused displeasure, — of resentment that stirs in the very doing of undeserved good, and embitters it, — the offense, and the outraged beneficence of power.

"Hear now, ye rebels!" he shouted, as he lifted up the rod before them. "Must we fetch you water out of the rock?" And twice, with vehemence, exaggerating and tran-

scending the act commanded, he smote the face of the cliff before which they stood.

The beautiful, hidden water gushed forth ; the people drank, and the beasts ; they were once more glad and thankful.

But Moses, deep in his true heart, heard the rebuking voice of the Lord :

“ Thou hast sinned. Thou hast not sanctified Me, in the eyes of the children of Israel. Thou shalt not take this people into the land which I have given them.”

That which maketh manifest is Light. Because the Light was in the soul of Moses, his own quick condemnation came. “ The Word that I have spoken unto them, the same shall judge them in that day,” saith the Lord.

“ This is the water of Meribah ” (of striving), God spoke with his own Thought into the thought of Moses. “ The children of Israel strove here with the Lord, and He was sanctified in them.”

It was a question between the people and their God ; it was not between the congregation and Moses. God’s mercy and his gift settled it. “ He was sanctified in them.” He stooped to their ignorance ; he forbore with their insolence. He showed them once more

that He was God. "I will be glorified in the midst of thee ; and they shall know that I am God." . . . "I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned." . . . "When I have brought them again . . . and gathered them . . . and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations ; *then shall they know that I am the Lord their God*, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen : but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there."

"I will sanctify my great name, and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. . . .

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you . . . and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, . . . and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers ; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

That is the writing of the prophet Ezekiel in the Name of the Lord : its whole burden and motive is, "I will deal with my people,

both in judgment and mercy, *so that they may know that it is I, and that I am the Lord their God.*"

The Revelation of himself in all their life; his abiding with them, his providing for them, his ruling of them; these are his age-long lessons to his people; this is the history of God with man in the earth. That they may come to the eternal life, which is the knowing me, their God: that the "Will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. This is the sanctification, and redemption; this is the "new heaven and the new earth" that we are to look for; the making of which is the "long-suffering of the Lord," that we "account salvation."

And as by the flash of truth in a single word, Moses knew all this, and was humble in the sight of God. He was one with God in his rebuke, and rebuked and humbled himself. "I shall not lead this people in; it is not his will; I am not worthy." In a full acceptance of his sentence, he submitted; no whit changed or shaken in his faith; no hair's breadth wavering in his loyalty and service. "I will lead them *to* the Land; but I shall not go over into *this* Canaan."

Was this condemnation? Was it penalty, — an angry punishment? Was it not rather a closer divine fellowship, a more absolute belonging to the Most High? Was Moses not altogether at one with the Lord, even against the fault in himself that he would, with all his heart, the Lord should destroy?

He might not enter the land on earth that was to be divided to the tribes: he might not, after all, have part or lot in it: whether or not, was not his certainty strong that he should yet enter the Canaan of God? And would the story of Moses have been complete, — would the Faith of Moses have been utterly proved, — had not this last test, this last renunciation of self and acceptance of God's thorough work and will with him been permitted to his true, unswerving spirit?

Moses believed as we ought to believe. That it is not God's will to hurt for the sake of hurting, or of taking vengeance; but rather it is his love which will not stop short of hurting, if by hurting He can heal; it is his avenging of *us* against our evils, and not his own avenging against ourselves, when He chastises. His rebuke is our conviction of his truth; it is our bringing-back to his

righteousness. "There is no longer any condemnation to them who are in Christ;" who are in the relation of children to the Father; who submit, and acknowledge, and accept; who confess and forsake, and rejoice in the faithfulness and justice that will "cleanse from all unrighteousness."

The moment a soul takes this attitude, it is redeemed; the sin is no more in it; it has laid hold of the divine equity, and "iniquity has no more dominion over it." It is "not under the law, but under grace." The very chastisement is grace. There is a tenderer understanding between the spirit chiding itself through an inmost apprehension of the chiding of the Lord, and the Lord of that spirit, than any mere partial orderliness of life, which seems blameless, can bring. There is greater joy over the sinner who repents, than over the ninety and nine who know not that they need repentance. There is a more exalted beatitude in the sweet denial that is borne from a Love that denies Itself in the withholding, and bears penalty with the penitent, than in the easy permission of our own way, that would never open to us the deep experience of God's most intimate dealing,

the beautiful force of his most stringent leading.

Transgression, — Repentance, — Reconciliation: in the mystery of God's plan for his souls upon this earth, these three things have to be; through them only do we come to the knowledge of what is in his heart for us, and of how in his very heart we are held, and live.

To be fully Prophet of Israel, Moses must needs know these; must fail, must judge himself with God's judgment, consent to the righteous consequence of his misdoing, and with his contrition and consent be swept into the very bosom of Almighty sympathy, identified with the accusing holiness. For "who is he that condemneth" in us, but the "Christ who died, nay rather who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?"

At Horeb, Moses had been called to be Seer; at Sinai to be Lawgiver; at Kadesh, he entered into the supreme experience that makes a man the redeemed son of God.

Between Moses and Jesus of Nazareth, this was the difference. This is the essential proving of the transcendent nature of the Christ.

Made flesh for us, — partaking of our humanity, — sharing its pain, — He yet “knew no sin,” therefore no repentance. His suffering for sin was on the God-side, — as God suffers. He bore our iniquities as God bears. He was not redeemed, but Redeemer; He was not forgiven, but Forgiver. He entered into death with us, that we might enter into life with Him.



PART V

LAST DAYS OF THE WANDERINGS

CHAPTER I

THE SERPENTS OF FIRE, AND THE SERPENT OF BRASS

IN the latter days of any period, the action of its history accelerates, intensifies; events crowd; significances deepen. We look for some near, great end, instinctively, when things so happen. We recognized the emphatic "signs of the times."

We are told, in tremendous figures, how this shall be in the latter days that are to come upon the present earth; on the brink of the great Entering In of the Race to its final inheritance.

So with the Israelites in the last days of their Wandering, in their yet prolonged pilgrimage around the desolate ridges of Seir, it was as if the things they had yet to learn,—the interpretations that must yet be given,—

the experiences needful to complete to them lesson and warning, and to show them their help and remedy, — followed in very rapid sequence, and with augmenting weight of import.

We come to one of these — whose type touches the very quick of human penalty and pain, and reaches over into the very Gospel of a deliverance yet to be wrought out — shortly after the departure from Kadesh, and the death and burial of Aaron at Mount Hor.

Once more the contumacy of the people was conquered, and their critical need was met, by a manifestation of direct power from God, made through a command to his minister ; a doing and happening the legend and memorial of which, as that of Aaron's Rod, continued as history and sign in the Hebrew nation down through the generations, until all signs and events of the Old Testament were confirmed and fulfilled, in an interior and supreme significance, by the New.

Edom had refused to give Israel passage through his border. The whole host, therefore, had moved again southward, coming to Mount Hor. There Aaron had died, in the moun-

tain ; Eleazar, his son, had been solemnly invested with his office ; and the people had mourned for Aaron thirty days.

Then King Arad, the Canaanite of the south, had come upon them, and Israel, praying and fighting, "vowing a vow unto the Lord," had conquered, and destroyed the Canaanitish cities at Hormah.

After that, journeying on "by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom," — their march directed to the head of the Gulf of Akabah, the eastern Red Sea arm, where they would bend again northward, around and beyond the mountains of Edom, — "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." And again their discouragement found its invariable vent in speaking "against God and against Moses."

"Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water ; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

"And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people ; and much people of Israel died."

They were bitten of evil and poisonous creatures ; their own ingratitude and obstinacy

and unbelief came back upon them in the visitation of mean, creeping, stinging, deadly creatures of the ground ; as they had assailed and wounded with bitterness and burning reproach, they were themselves assailed and wounded ; in their bodies they realized what the sin of their spirit and speech had been. They were made to feel what they could feel ; that they might learn the wrong of their wrong-doing, the just displeasure of their God, and beyond that, his long-suffering patience, his help and healing.

This is what the memory and the legend must have conveyed, as it passed on from lip to lip, from thought to thought, and men grew to some beginning of understanding of what the way of the Almighty had been with them. It is only put down in the Record as bare fact ; but it was fact which had living truth in it, and by the living truth was opened up at last.

“ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee ; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.

“ And Moses prayed for the people.”

Take away the serpents. It was the true prayer, if only it reached inwardly enough. Take away the discontent, the repining, the reviling, out of our hearts.

Did Israel pray this? Doubtless Moses prayed it for them. Doubtless, deep in his soul, he longed and besought in their behalf the availing deliverance; that they might be turned from their own groveling and sensual desires, that could only sting their peace; that were of the ground, and ate the dust of the ground; that, stealthy and sinuous, haunted their unwilling feet in the desert pathway, and smote them unawares through their own feebleness. Strength in the Lord would have enabled them to crush their enemies' heads; long afterward it was said of the faithful, and promised to them who should go forth in the name of God and his truth, "They shall take up serpents; they shall cast out devils; if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

Doubtless this truth was in the soul of Moses; and from it his inspiration came. The truth in any man is a hold upon all truth, upon all righteous and beautiful law in the universe, of spirit and of things; it discerns

the unknown by a divine instinct; it grasps help and remedy not yet demonstrated; it goes beyond and anticipates the slowness of science; and hence comes miracle, — the showing beforehand of what in the Day coming shall be the common and the everyday.

“How shall I lift this people up from the ground?” the prophet questions with anxious wrestling in himself. “How shall I make them *look up*, and *not down*?” The wisdom of that aphorism is as old as Moses.

“It is in their low life of sense that they fall, and are hurt; how can I make them see the higher, that they may abide in it, and be safe?”

In our day, they are coming back to this same quest, inventing “Christian Science;” making a theory and a new departure out of an age-long principle; discovering what has been told and shown from the beginning; separating, as the manner of a limited truth-seeking is, one great verity from its harmony and co-working with all verities, and denying and asserting in its name, on the one hand all natural and appointed human experience in the flesh, and on the other a human supremacy from which the flesh — even the flesh in which

Christ himself suffered — must, for a time, hinder us.

The thought of Moses sprang forward, upward, touched with a heavenly foreknowledge. “They must see the serpent itself lifted up!” was the word that flashed into his consciousness.

There are two serpents: the serpent of the dust, and the serpent of the heavenly light. There are two knowledges: the knowledge of sense, and the knowledge of the spirit. In the one, man is hurt, and dies; in the other, he is healed, and lives again.

“Make thee” (for a sign) — came the ordaining perception, taking form and plan with him, as every spiritual teaching did — “a fiery serpent;” a glowing, shining image; “and set it upon a banner-staff; it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”

Not only should the poisonous serpents be taken away, but the flesh that had been bitten and poisoned should be healed. Not only should sin be removed, but the poison it had left in life should be withdrawn also. The forgiveness of the Lord is, *in the end*, an absolute remission. “I will heal their back-

slidings; I will love them freely; I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

"Whether is easier," saith the Son of Man, "to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power *on earth*," — even in the earthly condition and against the earthly retribution — "to forgive sin, Arise, take up thy bed," — that on which thou liest helpless through thine own unwisdom and misdoing, — "and go unto thine house." Return where thou wast meant to abide.

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the *remnant of his heritage*," — the remnant in his children, — in *every child of his*, — that is true, that is savable, that is still of himself?

"He will turn again, he will have compassion on us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

Which promise and confidence the Christ also redeemed and confirmed with a verity, by direct and visible act. "Go," he commanded the evil spirits that infested the maniacs; and

as in their frenzy they had besought permission of him, "they went into the herd of swine;" they took to themselves their own low nature and affinity in the unclean, prohibited beasts; "and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."

Before the eyes of the multitude, and for a heavenly assurance, it was done; the divine remission was dramatized; the evils were remanded to their proper habitat, and with that which they could wholly defile, were utterly destroyed.

For the devils have nothing to do with *man*, the element of the Divine in the human being; they belong to, and can possess only, the debasable sense-nature which is nevertheless given to the man clean, to be ruled and *kept* from debasement, and so sanctified and lifted up to God. In the last event, the *man* shall be saved; the devils and their work must perish from the man, even though they should leave no individual life-consciousness behind, but God should have to resume his own dishonored essence, and do with it as He will.

Looking back from the New Testament, we read the signs of the Old in the light of their

spiritual fulfillment. It was they who could reach forward and inward, could forefeel and foresee the coming Gospel, who prophesied it in word and deed, beyond even their own entire interpreting. The Redemption of Christ was in the heart and hope of Moses, when he lifted up the shining Serpent, a celestial omen, in the wilderness. Even so the Son of Man — the holy, healing Power and Wisdom — should be “lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,” saith both parable and Scripture.

We have our Lord’s own word that his Father *meant* the sign. In all God’s creation and providence there is nothing without a meaning. And the Meaning and the Will are the essential force that makes unity of law and demonstration in things visible and invisible; compelling even remotest outward issues in their sure accordance.

Moses *believed* when he fashioned the image of pure, enduring metal, — the “fine copper, precious as gold,” — and raised it up in the sun, so that its brightness smote like live flame upon the vision of the people. The people,

through him, believed, — so far as their need and perception went at the moment ; and according to their faith it was done unto them.

Is there anything here to stumble at ?

Do we stumble to-day at wonders as great, except that we think we have learned something of the wherefore and the conditions, and how to apply and connect them ? Do we scoff at the power that runs along the lines of trolley and telephone, by which we are transported from place to place, and talk across distances which distinguishable sound cannot, without the new medium, traverse ?

But suppose that sometime, through cataclysmal changes, depopulations, relapses from civilization, breakings-up of interchange and understandings, destruction of records, these knowledges and appliances should be lost ; and that only in a few surviving chronicles of a dim elder time should some brief, unexplained statement be handed down to a far posterity, — where would be the faith on the earth to believe that once men traveled by an invisible force, and sent words around the world on hanging or on buried wires ? We are living in miracle all the time ; we are getting to take it very coolly and of course.

We do not even stagger at mind-healing, faith-cure, thought-transference, hypnotic control; only we do not any longer call these things miracle. Moses, with his brazen serpent, acted in advance of what we more or less accept in modern discovery. Who knows if we are not working backward, after all, toward the simplest truth, the most direct potency? In our more complicated life and motive, there is more of illusion and scheming insincerity to disentangle from our facts, than there was in the facts and the time of the Exodus. If the day of miracle is over, it is so to our vitiated apprehension, that will not recognize any work above our own, or that which we might do on the lines of accounted cause, if we could but have the handling. We think we understand so much, that we refuse to wonder. But God quietly works on his marvels, and every happening is a word, and every showing a sign, of which we fail to get the spiritual utterance and correspondence. Down the centuries, with an echo from the mystical Past and a trumpet ring into the unsounded Future, comes the Voice,—“I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not: how shall ye believe if I tell you

heavenly things?" Ye have discharged faith from your practical life; how shall I lift you up into the everlasting meanings?

Laid up in every one of these old stories of a past and simple time, is the essential application to all human experience, the vital prophecy of inherent law. It is what they have been made into story for. From the Garden of Eden to the Fall of Jerusalem, a great allegory is written out in a history that is not only one of a race, but of the Race of the races. And forever it repeats the same, in form after form.

There are the two wisdoms: the low and the high; that which creeps, and that which is raised up in light. When man, bitten with the poison of the sensual serpent, craves only the one and turns away from the other, God says, in his lovingkindness, "That way is death to men. I will not let them reach on through earthly knowledge, to an earthly tree of life, and stay in sense forever. They must die in the flesh, that they may be born in the Spirit. The life of the flesh shall be shortened. I will hem them round, to deliver them. Their knowledges also shall be bound. Every now and then they shall be destroyed.

They shall hold in themselves the elements of destruction. There shall be periods, and periods. Men shall learn, and lose. They shall discover, and forget, and begin again. It shall be, Thus far and no farther, till they turn to Me with all their hearts ; till they look up to Me, who am showing them my truth, and believe my heavenly things that I am telling them by my earthly. For the heavenly is in the earthly, and the earthly by the heavenly."

And God will have his way.

At last the angel shall stand "with one foot on the sea," — the ungraspable, the image of the intangible, the spiritual, — "and one upon the land," — the positive, solid, material, earthly ; and shall "lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth forever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there shall be time" — limit and incompleteness — "no longer ; but that *the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to his servants the prophets.*"

"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known."

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

The works of God are speech and language; his meanings wait; but all is sign, miracle; in all a revelation hides itself. In all there is harmony, order, concurrence. The outward could never be but for the inward; the inward cannot fail of expression through the outward.

We shall believe the thing, when we find the thought that was within it. Christ himself explained the Brazen Serpent; He will open all Scripture to us when He comes in the Spirit, as He did on the Easter Night when He walked with his friends on the road to Emmaus. He only is "worthy to open" the seven-sealed Book, "*written within and upon the back side*," "and to loose the seals thereof."

"The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," — He who in himself joined the Divine with the human, the essential Word of God with the scripted creation, — "hath prevailed." "The Lamb as it had been slain," — the Eternal Life that had tasted death, — having the "seven horns" of power, and the "seven eyes" that see all that the

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Father doeth, — whose vision and strength are those of “the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth,” building his Great Parable, — “He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.”

“And if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF BALAAM

ALONGSIDE of, and interwoven with the story of Moses, the whole, single-hearted Prophet of the Lord, we find, toward the close of the record, that of the half, double-hearted prophet Balaam ; a man of the Midianites, visited by the Spirit of God, "having his eyes open" to the vision of the true, having his ears opened to the inward speech of the Almighty. In this he was as Moses in Israel ; he was, in the ideal apprehension of the One Living God, as Abraham among the Chaldeans. But there was in him an alternation and mingling of heathenism with faith ; of common enchantments with inmost illumination ; there was in his purpose and act a vacillation and contradiction between his low Midianitish nature and its affiliations, and his recognition of the holy authority of the Supreme. Counsel came to him from on high ; but it was met by earthly consideration which temporized with and per-

verted it. Errand was given him to do, and message to say; he dared not refuse; the power of the truth compelled him; and yet, after his reluctant acknowledgment and forced obedience, he neutralized and profaned his mission by counsel of his own with the chiefs of his people, to the seduction of the Israelites into sin that brought down upon them again the anger and the smiting of their God.

It is a strange history; it comes to us as an antithesis to the pure, loyal seeking and service of Moses; made a part, by its connection of incident and consequence, of the narrative of those, it is set over against them in a sharp contrast which of itself, without any pointing comment, defines the everlasting difference, in essence and result, between the entire rendering up of self to the Lord, and the profaning of the Divine by the intrusion and admixture of self-motive and time-serving with the high, direct instincts of the heaven-visited soul.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" is written between the lines in blazing characters all through the literal, brief text of the account. Whether directly from the pen of Moses, and in his words or not, it is a part of

the history of Moses, and an illustration by contradistinction of the great, thorough, uncompromising Belief of the man called also out of Midian by the Manifested Presence and personal command which became to him thenceforth the central reality and the unquestioned leading of his life.

If Moses had but halfway received and followed, he might have been as Balaam ; therefore the story of Balaam concerns us intimately in our study of the Faith out of which unfolded the work of the Exodus, and the destiny of the most distinctively representative people of the earth.

It also interests us, incidentally, because in it appears one of those forms of circumstantial assertion over which circumstantial judgment has stumbled ; has made much of as a stumbling-block, and seized eagerly as excuse for discarding all trust in Biblical authenticity ; but which, looked at in the interior light of witness, becomes yet one more evidence of the central grasp of Scripture utterance, upon that which transcends utterance, and can only be expressed by vehicle of figure. The figure is simply so close, so true, that we hardly know — and need hardly trouble to know —

whether fact of outward occurrence figured it to them who needed outward occurrence to learn by, or was represented in parable to convey a living truth of parable.

Suppose we read straight through, by inner light, — by the X-ray which pierces shell of outer substance, — the recital of what happened in and to this “Balaam,” (pilgrim or lord of the people), “son of Beor,” “brought from Aram” (the high exalted place) “out of the mountains of the East.”

The children of Israel, after their first border battles in which they conquered Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, set forward through their lands, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan-Jericho.

And “Moab was sore afraid,” and was distressed because of the children of Israel. “And it was said among the elders of Midian, This company will lick up all round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field.” And Balak, the king of Moab, sent, in his fear and distress, to him who was known as a prophet, Balaam, dwelling at Pethor, near the Euphrates, to come and curse the invaders: “for,” he says in his message, “I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom

thou cursest is cursed." And the elders, carrying the price of divination in their hands, and the words of the message of the king on their lips, went the long desert way and found Balaam.

Now, remembering how it was when Moses sought the Lord, inquiring of Him, and how his implicit sincerity received the word and his unswerving action followed, observe and compare Balaam's invoking of the prophetic inspiration which he undoubtedly believed in and received, and the quality of his obedience to the heavenly vision.

"Lodge here this night," he says to the messengers of the king. "I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak to me."

And in the night-time Balaam turned his thought and asking to the presence of God, and opened his heart before Him. And God, searching his heart, found there more than it understood of itself, and made the demand of him which set him to face and declare, straight to the point, its workings. "What men are these with thee?" With what concern of men come you before your God?

"They are the messengers of Balak, king of Moab, who hath sent word to me, A people

is come out of Egypt, and covereth the face of the earth; curse them for me, and peradventure I may overcome them and drive them out."

Instantly, in the clear presenting of the thing before the Lord, the speciousness and half-covered persuasion of his doubt melted and scattered from his mind as a thin mist before a strong sun-ray, and the plain word sounded through his consciousness: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed."

Blessing and cursing are of the Lord, and his righteousness; they are not to be traded with; they are not to be asked for of man by men, and a price offered. Balaam was prophet enough, truly, to discern this utterance of the Spirit of the Lord; to have it take immediate, vital hold of him. For the time, it possessed and ruled him; in the strength and compulsion of it he rose up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, "Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." And so they went away.

But King Balak had not done with him. Another company of princes, more in number and more honorable, came to Pethor, and

spoke to Balaam yet more urgently. They promised him, as the Tempter promised Jesus in the wilderness, "very great honor," and to do for him whatsoever he should say; if he would only — using the power from God for his own will — "curse for them this people."

And Balaam answered, out of the noble, loyal *God's-heart* of him, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of my God, to do less or more." And then, out of the little, human, hesitating, covetous heart of himself, he added, with a hope of escape, of compromise even with the Almighty in the matter, "Tarry ye here, I pray you, this night also, that I may know what the Lord may say unto me more."

Self-persuaded, he lay down to quiet and soul-question. Self-persuaded, he let a voice speak to him, and called it the voice of the Lord.

"If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."

He would put himself into the midst of temptation. He would go with it a little way. And *then* he would hearken — through the

confusing tumult of men's urging and his own desires — for what God would say.

He would not listen for it now, wholly and finally, while he was alone with God. He would drift with circumstance, and let circumstance decide him. When ever did a man do that, and not be led by circumstance into sin?

He rose up in the morning, relieved by his postponed, left-open decision, and saddled his beast, and went with the princes of Moab.

"And God's anger was kindled against him because he went."

Does not this statement of itself show clearly that the vision of the night and the so-called voice of the Lord in it, were not true vision and a certain word, but wrested to the man's own wish and motive? Can we otherwise interpret and reconcile the sequent declarations?

God's anger — which is his opposing love, — was kindled; and his angel "stood in the way" of Balaam, "for an adversary against him."

"He was riding upon his ass;" a mere stolid, stupid beast of burden. And yet the Lord used the ass to prevent the prophet.

“The ass saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way.” She felt a supreme compulsion, and a fear, as of a sword drawn against her. “And she turned aside out of the way, and went into the field.”

Balaam had committed his cause to circumstance, and here was circumstance. The Lord had not left him yet. He “prevents and follows;” if we will have circumstance to rule us, He will meet us with it. He will shut us in on every side. Nevertheless, if we will persist against everything, He leaves us our freewill. If we treat his defense as obstacle, He will sometimes let us beat it down.

Balaam smote the ass, — God’s circumstance, — to turn her into his own way. But the creature presently was between two walls, “in a path of the vineyards,” and again the angel of the Lord stood there; again the fear and the compulsion seized her. She thrust herself, terrified, against the wall, pressing obstinately in resistance to her master’s urging; and Balaam’s foot was crushed.

Now there are especial promises, in figure, through the Bible, for the guiding and defense of the foot of man, *if set in God’s way*. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the

Lord." "I will give mine angel charge over thee, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone."

Balaam was out of the way, and out of charge. Or rather the angel had now, of necessity, a different charge concerning him. His foot was crushed; his going disabled. For all that, he still struggled against rebuke and hindrance, and again he smote the ass, and forced her forward. But they came to "a narrow place, where there was no way to turn, to the right hand nor to the left." And there was the angel of the Lord again, leaving the man alone, but working through the terrors of a beast. And the ass fell down upon her rider. The very means of progress utterly failed: He was lamed, and the ass would no longer bear or obey him. All his intents were crossed, his powers defeated.

And yet he would not understand, nor submit. The voice of God had been silenced in his soul, and he could not even see His sign. He only struggled the harder with his thwarting circumstance. He smote the poor ass yet more severely.

And then a cry broke forth from the animal, such as spoke like syllabled words to the con-

sciousness of her master. Whether in speech asinine or human, this is what she said, and what Balaam understood. "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me three times?"

Did never animal, before nor since, cry out with such appeal as that, from the cruelty to the love and debt of its owner and tormentor? Was never human spirit touched, before nor since, by such an utterance, either to fresh brutality of rage, or a sudden pity and remorse?

Balaam was not subdued, but incensed. The stubborn beast had gotten too much the better of him. "Thou hast mocked me!" he shouted. "If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill thee!" And so he would.

The poor ass moaned forth another remonstrance. "Did I ever do so before? Could I help it to-day?" And Balaam's heart returned to him, as the question pierced it to its true feeling.

"Nay," he acknowledged. "Until now thou hast been faithful. Perhaps, now also, it is faithfulness."

Then, at the first honest repentance, the first tenderness of a true conscience, the Lord

drew his servant toward himself again, and "opened his eyes."

And Balaam saw in his hindrance the angel of the Lord ; and that the sword was not in his own hand, to slay the instrument, but in the hand of the angel, to prevail against his sin. " And he bowed down his head, and fell flat upon his face."

Balaam also, after all, was a Believer. " I have sinned," he said to the Presence that made itself known to him. " I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me. Now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again."

Now, there was no need to go back. Now, with his changed and restored purpose, he might go forward, in the fear and service of the Lord.

" Go with the men," said the angel ; " but speak only the word that I shall speak unto thee."

" So Balaam went with the princes of Balak."

And to Balak the king, he said, " I am come unto thee : have I any power at all to say anything ? The word that God putteth into my mouth, that shall I speak."

And Balak took him into the high places of Baal. And then the prophet conformed himself to the customs of the heathen by a sacrifice; but he made the sacrifice after the ordinance of Israel, and in his heart he offered not unto Baal, but unto God.

And then he left Balak standing by the burnt sacrifice, and "went to an high place," alone, to meet the Lord.

"And the Lord put a word into his mouth," and he came back, and blessed Israel. "For how shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" he said. "Who can count the dust of Jacob or the number of the fourth part of Israel?" Though I die for the saying, "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Still Balak — with a strong patience that testified to his absolute confidence in the power of this man who withstood him, either to bless or to curse in the truth of the Most High — entreated and urged:—

"Come with me to another place, whence thou mayest see them; *the utmost part of them, but not all*. Perhaps then thou mayest curse them for me."

It is always under a hoodwink that men

endeavor or persuade an evasion of the irrefragable. Perhaps Balaam even then had a lingering feeling, as a child has when he entreates and teases, that God had possibly not said all; that there was still something for the Lord to be reminded of, and to consider, as there might be for a man before he should pronounce irrevocably. Would He think how terrible were those numbers of Israel? Might they yet be cursed — or crossed — in this present threat and attempt, if only in this?

And they went up to the top of Pisgah. There they offered again, upon seven altars. And again Balak stood by the burnt sacrifice, and Balaam went away again, to meet the Lord.

“And the Lord put a word into his mouth,” and he came back to the king with a second message: “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he not said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? — Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.”

Then Balak begged him, “Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.” He would

be content now, if only things might be left as they were. But Balaam's unaltered answer was, "Told I not thee, All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do?" Balak was nearly wild with his disappointment and despair. "Come yet to another place," he besought; and "he brought Balaam unto the top of Peor."

Again, — the third time, — the seven altars, the seven bullocks, and the seven rams.

But the third time, Balaam went away with a soul cleared from the last cloud of pagan confusion or doubt. It would not be merely "a word in his mouth" that he would have now from the Lord. It would come to him by the way of his heart, in his deepest, because single, convictions.

"He went," not as at other times, "to seek enchantments," outward signs; some fresh wording or token to modify the divine sentence as he had understood it before. "He set his face toward the wilderness;" a place empty of all but God; and there he had a vision of "Israel abiding in his tents, according to his tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him."

He went back to Balak, and for the last time "took up his parable:" —

"The man whose eyes are open, which saw

the vision of the Almighty, which heard the words of God, hath said, How goodly are thy tents, O Israel!" In them are the abiding and the countenance of the Lord. "*God* hath brought Israel forth out of Egypt. He hath the strength of an unicorn. He shall eat up the nations. . . . Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

Then Balak was very angry, and smote his hands together. Yet the power of the truth was upon him, and the Presence of God by his prophet awed and restrained him from violence.

"*Flee* to thy place!" he cried out to Balaam, as if he would say, "lest I do thee a mischief." "I thought to promote thee to great honor; but lo! the Lord hath kept thee back from honor."

Even the heathen king believed thus far, and bore discomfited testimony.

"Spake I not to thy messengers the same thing?" demanded Balaam. "How could I do otherwise? Said I not, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own mind; what the Lord saith, that will I speak?"

"And now, I go unto my people: come, I will tell thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days."

Balaam dared now to go on and speak the whole truth to this king, who asked for the truth, only praying that somehow it might be truth in his favor.

"The man whose eyes are open, . . . which heard the words of God; and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, — he hath said: —

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob: a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel. . . . And Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion."

Meanwhile, there shall be destruction. "Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish forever." "The Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee" — even thee, Israel — "away captive." . . . "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!"

After this solemn uplifting of the curtain of the mystery of time, — this grand and awful glimpse of what Israel had been chosen

for, both to do and to endure, to receive and to forfeit, unto the Coming of the One King upon the earth, for the ruling of the One Sceptre over the nations, — Balaam “rose up,” calmly, unafraid, unhindered, “and went, and returned unto his place: and Balak also went his way.”

Our judgment of Balaam must still remain twofold. Seeing him one way, he is sublime; another way, he is despicable. Because he had two ways. He was neither single-eyed nor single-hearted. In conscience and in vision, he was astigmatic. Looking back presently, and reading his word and act by closely following events, we shall discover the deep, even self-deluding duplicity of his “counsel” with the king, by which he afterward contravened the Lord’s message, prompting the seduction of Israel to evil, blasted and cut short his own career, and sent down his name in obloquy and reproach, through the Hebrew generations and the Christian Church, to this our day.

Never spake the Son of Man a greater “verily” than when he said, “If thine eye be

single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

CHAPTER III

THE VEXING OF THE MIDIANITES

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them.” And again, “The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the Children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered to thy people.”

Why all this smiting and slaying? Why all this bloodshed and despoiling? Why such driving out and extermination of whole peoples, and taking by violence of their lands?

Again and again the same terrible, dismaying questions confront us. Unable to answer, unable to look further than the mere passing occurrence, — stopping at the accounts of these particular casualties as if they were exceptional in human experience, and God were bound especially to justify them, — men are in haste to revolt, and to fling reproach and discredit upon a record claimed to be Divine; upon the chronicle of events said to have

been ordered and appointed in all their succession by the will and wisdom of the Almighty ; and upon all else, consequently, which the Sacred Writing sets forth and sustains.

But why find fault with the Bible and with Bible times, and not with the whole world and all its construction, its ages and its history? Do not the same questions confront us everywhere? Is there 'anything different in the story of the Israelites and their breaking away from Egypt, and their conquest of their forefathers' old home in Canaan, from that of one nation after another that has broken from servitude, want, or barbarism, and subdued whatever stood in its way to a fairer possession, a broader rule and privilege, a possibility of a civilization and development which indeed it knew not of itself to anticipate or determine, but to which it has been led by the same wonderful, irresistible Power and Providence that worked for and with those old twelve tribes of Hebrews, and established by them a nationality and an order of life into which the very Son of Man — the outcoming and perfect Humanity — could be born from the Father into his waiting world? Is our own American history any less strange, or any more free from

the human conflicts and partial wrongs that accompany every partial phase of progress in the grand expansion of the forceful germ of soul-life from its first hiding in the earthly to its final evolution into a majestic completeness and its inheritance of an everlasting kingdom? Science bows to the facts it finds, and bends to them its conclusions, accepting process, and confessing "the survival of the fittest." Shall Faith do less, — Faith which defines the fittest with a larger interpretation, looks deeper in for causes, further on for issues and consummations?

We can but repeat, and insist on with ourselves to remember, that these things must be looked on in the light of a supreme event, the fulfilling of an eternal purpose. The earthly *has* to be disregarded; to be rent, trampled upon, destroyed. Every partial and evil thing *has* to be swept away, even with a sword; to be washed from the spirit of humanity, even with the body's blood of the human. Our "Why?" reaches down, and back, and up, to the very core of law and creation, — to the very original, utmost, eternal thought and impulse of the Nature which creates and conducts, — and demands of *that* an answer to re-

ceive and understand which would burst all limit in us, and make gods of us at once, knowing the good and the evil.

We are not the makers, but the made; we can only experience, and watch, and wait what God will do with us; saying, He deals with us as Righteousness must deal with sinfulness, as Completeness must deal with incompleteness.

He leaves it greatly with our own continual choice, the way we will compel Him to take. The instant man renounces sin, — single, individual disobedience in the least or in the greatest of his individual heart and life, — that instant all the God-force in the world will be turned from cursing to blessing. For cursing is *crossing*; it is one and the same thing. The lines conflict; at the collision point the judgment fires break forth.

It is always corruption and the evil thing that is warred against. When the Israelites themselves yielded to corruption, they were plagued and destroyed; when an evil nation first corrupted and then withstood them, the Lord conquered with the *remnant* of his people, and the wicked perished. The *enemy*, all through Holy Writ, in story and psalm, in

command and prophecy, is the Evil ; *that* is to be triumphed over and brought to nought. That is what the men of the Bible were taught, by all the lessons of their lives, singly and as a nation, to know ; that is the Belief built of their experience, and registered "aforetime for our learning."

What has been, will be ; until all comes into the final, beautiful subjection and liberty to which everything struggles and tends. If we found in the Bible stories of a people who never strayed nor sinned, who never killed nor destroyed, nor seized with the strong hand, we should say, This is not a history of men as we have ever known them, or known of them ; it is a fable of Arcadia, a dream of heaven.

That such life may come, and not be a dream, or a vision of the unattainable, but a sure, divine reality, God lets men go through all that must at last show them how the self-struggle can never come to the divine satisfying, but the self-surrender to the holy shall bring down the baptism of the Holy, and all the created be filled full of the glory and gladness of the Creating.

Even through the din of strife and above

the shrieks of carnage, comes the Promise of the Time of the True. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

Nevertheless, this may not be attained by any external abrogation ; by any outward consent of multitudes ; it cannot be legislated for, nor arbitrated for, nor compelled. It can only arrive through individual purgation of evil, individual fealty to the true : then there shall be multitudes as one man, and one man shall be as a multitude. When law is in the single soul, there will be no need of senates, nor legislatures, nor Supreme Courts of Justice.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, though I was an husband unto them. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. *After those days*, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neigh-

bor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

That last clause, with its "for," is the intent and reason of all. Forgiveness and restoration, — not retribution and vengeance, — are the final purpose. *That I may* at last forgive, I will see to it that they shall learn. Covenant after covenant there shall be, — for "those days" and for the after days ; they shall have the law of my own Heart in their hearts, at the last, and my perfect Love shall have its way with them ; for "*I will* forgive," saith the Lord !

Close by the borders of the Promised Land, the Israelites had been dwelling in the land of the idolaters. The king of Moab, looking abroad upon the outspread tents of their hosts, said of them that they covered the face of the earth, abiding over against him ; and he trembled before the threat of their approach. He could get no curse against them, to strengthen him to try to drive them out, but only an

assurance from the prophet whom he entreated that the strength of the Lord God was with Israel, and the "shout of a king among them."

But the double man, Balaam, had not left him without a suggestion that craftily hedged the commandment of the Almighty with insinuation of a way around it. Even in his refusals of the curse, there had lurked precursively the subtle hint of what undoubtedly, according to subsequent Scriptural allusions, Balaam more or less openly advised : —

"He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

"There is the secret; Israel is upright; you may not prevail against him by the sword; you may hinder him by beguiling."

Behind whatever words were used was this evil counsel. The Midianites were strong in iniquity. And of that cunning speech it came to pass that they took allurements for their weapons, and Israel fell. He sinned with the strange people: he joined them in their heathen sacrifices; he threw himself headlong into the surging temptations; and "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him."

We may suppose that the doubleness of Balaam reached even to the sophistry with

himself that it was well for Israel to be tested. If the trial were withstood, this people would have thoroughly merited their favor with Jehovah, and nothing then could hinder their triumph. Where was any resisting of the Lord in this? If, on the other hand, Israel stumbled, and was overcome, where was the disloyalty on his part in having so declared and predicted? He had but stated the truth about God's dealing, the condition of his blessing. He had only said, "In righteousness is the safety of this people; the commandment of their God is their stronghold."

This seems, indeed, upon the face of the narrative, to have been all; and yet after the Israelites had fallen in sin and been punished with slaughter and plague, and been brought back to their work and their war, "avenging the Lord of Midian," Moses, passing sentence on the captives, brought indictment thus, against the wickedness and its inciter: "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord." And Micah, the prophet of an after age, urging against iniquity and oppression and false balances and lies, cries out, "O my people, remember now

what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord."

Away on again, in the exhortations of Peter and Jude the Apostles, and in the words of the Spirit himself to the churches, heard of Saint John the Divine, the same old example of warning is recalled and repeated : —

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished : chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. . . . Presumptuous are they, self-willed ; . . . spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you, . . . beguiling unstable souls : having an heart exercised with covetous practices ; cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."

"Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."

"I have a few things against thee" (church of Pergamos), "because thou hast there them

that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel."

That same Voice had spoken this, in the Life upon the earth : —

"Woe unto the world because of offences : it must needs be that offences come, but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh !"

"If any man cause to offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Balaam may hide his motive from himself ; he can never hide it from the Spirit of all Truth.

Among the many perishings, then, that have come, and that must come because of sin, and to make room for righteousness, the Midianites perished.

Balaam, the son of Beor, perished also with them, slain with the sword.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMP IN MOAB

THE children of Israel encamped in the plains of Moab.

They were not led over Jordan with an impetuous rush, to seize possession, at first sight and possible reach, of the beautiful land toward which they had made pilgrimage for forty years. It was not to be a heedless pouring in, as a wild horde, clutching at that which was to be theirs only under a Divine ordering, for a Divine end. They were to be under law and commandment still.

That an eager, enthusiastic multitude of men, strong in the great numbers that had terrified King Balak, and swayed by a hope and impulse that had, through whatever lapses into discontent, urged them onward for nearly half a century, should have bowed to the control of their leader at the supreme moment of approaching triumph, is alone a sufficient evidence of the mighty, realizing Belief of the

man himself in the God of his nation, and His continual inspiration and direction in every step and doing of its people.

This waiting, just over Jordan beyond Jericho, to receive the final reminders and admonitions of their Prophet Commander, and to learn his plan and prospectus for their future life and government,—this orderly acquiescence in delay, so simply set down without comment or argument, is one of the chief of those inherent proofs which establish the testimony, not of mere literal fact, but of the reality behind the fact, that we are seeking. It was truly a Prophet and a People bound together, and moved or checked, only by that which they believed in as a Divine Will, made known under divinely imposed conditions, who dwelt expectant in these plains along the borders of the Salt Sea and the River, until God's word should come to them to make their advance.

Moses had a great deal to say to his people. It would seem that he had begun with his Deuteronomy, or Repetition, as he talked with them by the way, during the last days of their slow approach through the desert country, all along from the Gulf of Akabah, under the

mountain ridge of Seir, toward the Dead Sea and the Jordan ; and that he only concluded it here, in this final encampment ; for we have the two separate statements, in the closing words of the Book of Numbers, repeated from a little further back, and the opening ones of the Book of Deuteronomy, — that “ these were the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by the Jordan near Jericho ; ” and “ these be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab, ” — all of these named places being either indistinctly traceable as once inhabited localities, or as known stations of the Israelites in their pilgrimage, in the desert of Paran or of Zin, stretching down from Canaan between El Tih and Mount Seir ; thus indicating the territory traversed in this last journeying, and the scene of the long, retrospective teaching.

It was a careful recapitulation ; a grand summing up of history and law ; a living over of the past, and a shaping forth and dictation

of the future ; a gathering together into a sublime unity of all the dealings of the Lord, and the assertions of his truth, and the requisitions of his righteousness, which had filled the life of Moses, now nearing to its close, and had been his august and sacred errand, not only to the Hebrew people, but through them to the coming generations of mankind. It was a review of faith and purpose which declares them reiteratively and distinctly, re-presenting them in the strong light of an already large fulfillment, and reaching on by them into a glory of realization that means far more to the world and its ages than just the coming of certain tribes of men into a certain corner of the earth for a temporary possession. It is like the review under the latter light, and at the pass of Jordan, of every human history and soul.

It reaches back to the days in Horeb, where the Israelites had sojourned until "the Lord God spake unto them, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount ; . . . Go, . . . and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers ;" the days in which they had increased so mightily, and had become "as the stars of heaven for multitude." "The

Lord God of your fathers," parenthesizes Moses grandly and tenderly in his reminding, "make you a thousand times so many as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you."

He sketches over again the government which he had constituted for them then; the appointment of the Judges from among, and over, the tribes.

"Hear the causes between your brethren," had been his charge to them; "and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it."

"I commanded you at that time," he says, "all the things that ye should do."

The departure from Horeb, the going through "all that great and terrible wilderness" between Horeb in the south and the mountain of the Amorites on the north; the search into the Land, and the finding of the sweet, grape-laden valley of Eshcol; the bringing down of the fruit to the camp by the

mountain ; the rejoicing with which the people cried, " It is a *good* land which the Lord our God doth give us ! " — all this Moses touched upon, calling back the story of the fathers to the minds of the children who, after the forty years more of wandering, had now come, with the fathers' story and its lessons in their hearts, to the borders of the Land again, in a closer and surer approach. Now, he was telling them, they were to enter in ; but they were to remember the old unbeliefs and the rebellions, that they should not fall into the like themselves.

" Notwithstanding " that the Land was found to be so good, and notwithstanding their great gladness, he goes on, speaking of the history of Israel as one in all the generations, " ye would not go up ; but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, and murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord God hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us."

Not only indeed was it the old evil of a past generation, yet inherent and latent in that to which the memory then came down ; it was

the same old evil that has lurked and lasted in the world till now; the age-long impatience of the human heart, that on the very edge of its inheritance turns from it ignorantly, blindly, willfully, because of the remaining pain and peril of the way; distrusts and rebukes the Lord, and lets fear blot out his promise, and the remembrance of all He has done so long "in the wilderness." The pathetic reproach of Moses falls upon all the complaint and rebellion of men against immediate difficulty, as it fell upon Israel: "Thou hast seen how the Lord thy God bore thee as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in *this* thing ye did not believe the Lord your God."

So, then, he repeats to them, the Lord was angry; and though they pleaded against his sentence with a selfish repentance, He would not hear them, but suffered them to rush into their own punishment as the only thing that could really convince them, rebelling as they were even in their declared contrition; and they "went presumptuously up into the hill" against their enemies, who "came out against them, and chased them, as bees do," stinging and destroying them, and compelling their retreat, "even unto Hormah."

"Then we turned," he says, patiently identifying himself with his people in all the penalty of their error, — "and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea;" the journey that was to consume the life of all the men of war who had sinned in that disobedience, to destroy them from among the host. "And we compassed Mount Seir many days," is his simple statement of the long wandering until again the Lord said, — as He says at last after whatever perverse or disciplinary pilgrimage, — "Ye have compassed this mountain (wilderness) long enough. Turn you northward."

Go you my way, now. And all the way, as I shall tell you. So the command came by the mouth of Moses to the people at Mount Seir. And here begins something different in the commanding; something that gives us, if we look for it, an insight into the very thing in the counsel of the Most High that has been made a stumbling-block against the faith of his Providence; the *why* of a destruction and a saving that seem arbitrary, partial, un-God-like, to a partial human comprehension. We must remind ourselves again that we are reading about God's leading of them that believe

in Him ; and not only of that, but of his *bringing* men to believe in Him. To that believing He had first led, through pains and oppressions, slaveries, judgments, temporal obstructions, even the sons of Abraham ; *in* that belief He was now showing them himself as the God of the covenant ; of the close-coming, and abiding ; the God of the Tabernacle, who makes his tent among the habitations of men ; who works with them and for them, according to his intent and promise from the beginning.

He was *training* a people — not so much better as yet than the rest — out of all the multitudes of the earth ; that there might be salvation in the earth ; that the knowledge of himself might begin again in it, in the pure, primal, and eternal way. He was dealing, for a time, as only with a handful. He was *making leaven*, to be hidden in the full measures of meal, that all might be leavened. That is always the way of the coming of the Kingdom of heaven.

We are not told what He was doing at the same time for the debased Canaanites ; how the very thrusting them from their possessions, the slaughter and despoiling of this generation of them, might be like his chastisements of the

wilderness upon his own chosen nation, who knew Him best, though as yet only a little, and whom He was leading by cloud and fire, *through one whole generation also* of suffering and loss, to their sure and beautiful inheritance under his love and law. We can see — human records can tell — but one side at a time ; yet, indeed, when all the stories shall have been lived and told, we shall know that God has been all around ; that He is, in truth, the God of the whole earth.

The Canaanites were to be dealt with as the God and Father of all knew best how to deal. Their idolatries, their low and sensual tribal life and custom, were to be broken up and swept away. A new march of men toward the everlasting Light was to be made way for. A believing host was to come in ; the Name and service of Jehovah were to be established upon the earth. Not a perfect, nor a deserving people, were these Hebrews ; it was a race yet filled with its own evils and ignorances ; but where do we learn, in all the material and spiritual evolution of the universe, that the perfect thing leaps into full development across any chasm of the unattained and the opposing ? It is only the *next* that takes place, and dis-

places ; but it does take its own place and turn, making the step onward. That which was behind may seem to perish, as to circumstance ; the *life* that was in it passes forward, God knows how. He who caused the fragments to be gathered up into the twelve baskets-full, — typic number for an entire saving, — has way, and time, and place, for all.

In the course of the Israelites northward, lay the lands of other peoples. The children of Jacob were not the only inheritors of gift and promise. The divine idea had not been altogether lost out of Edom and of Moab. The children of Esau possessed it in the one ; the children of Lot in the other. A bruised reed might the one be ; and smoking flax the other ; but the Lord will not break, nor quench. He will “bring forth,” from the least remnants, his “judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth ; the isles” — the small, separate, feeble places — “shall wait for his law.” Their time shall come ; meanwhile, his germ of truth is there, and He will shield it.

“The Lord spake unto me,” says Moses, “saying, Command thou the people, Ye are to pass through the coast of *your brethren* the

children of Esau, which dwell in Mount Seir ; they shall be afraid of you ; take heed to yourselves : meddle not with them. I will not give you of their land, no, not a foot's breadth. I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. . . . And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, . . . we turned, and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle. I will not give thee of their land for a possession ; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession."

"Contend not with your brethren ; despoil them not ; for my word is with them also." Do we not hear that command in these days also, defending way and place, given of the Lord, of every feeblest form of faith,—of every least lingering of heavenly motive in any human character ?

Overbear and cast out the militant evil ; there God is with you ; but move gently and peacefully among them that have God's word as well as you. Yes ; even "buy meat of them, that ye may eat ; and water that ye may drink." They, in my name, can give you something ;

they have the bread and the cup for you, because ye belong to Me ; they also shall have their reward.

Moses goes on : " Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered."

The thirty and eight years were complete, since the sentence of wandering, and the departure from Kadesh-Barnea. " All the generation of the men of war was wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them."

And the Lord said, " Thou art to pass over through Ar, this day ; when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them. I will not give thee of the land ; I have given it unto the children of Lot. . . . Rise up, and take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon : behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land ; begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations."

Yet Moses, by that same just command of God, gave the king of Heshbon opportunity. It was test ; after that, as it had been done

with Pharaoh, should be shown the deliverance the Lord had for his people.

"Give me meat, for money; give me water, for money; that we may eat and drink. I will pass through on my feet, — as in Sin and in Ar; do as they did unto me; until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God giveth us."

Then the fellowship and the brotherhood broke down, and the enmity began. The king of Heshbon refused. "God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate," as He had done with Pharaoh. Because they would have it so; because by the law of life and spirit, God could do no other with either for the time.

And so the terror set in again; the cities were taken, and the people perished; "the men, and the women, and the little children."

Are they not perishing every day? Yet God careth for the sparrows.

Almost to the point they had then reached, encamped in the river margins opposite to Jericho across the Jordan, — on the literal brink of the accomplishment of the protracted hope of a generation, — Moses had here brought



his reminiscences of the long way ; calling the people continually to observe and acknowledge the hand of the Lord God in all their leading. It was still, and always, "The Lord said unto me," and "so I spake unto you," and "so I commanded you," and "so it came to pass," and "the Lord delivered into our hands" the kings, and the cities, and the people.

Og, the giant, king of Bashan, the last of the terrible men, was last contended with and overcome, close upon the Jordan borders of the Promised Land ; and all the cities of the plain, and the land along the river Arnon, and Mount Gilead, and their cities, fell into the hands of the army of the Israelites ; and Moses had divided them among the children of Reuben and Gad and Manasseh, as the first possessions and outworks of the new kingdom of the tribes. There these brotherhoods were to leave their families and their cattle, and go over with their other kinsmen as men of war, to conquer and possess, until all should be established beyond Jordan ; and to this enterprise and end Moses commanded and appointed Joshua, the Man of Might. "I said unto him," repeats he in his narrative now so nearly ended, "Thine eyes have seen all that the

Lord your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. Ye shall not fear them; for the Lord your God he shall fight for you." Not the man Joshua, in whatever might and courage he showed strong, heroic, should have the battle on his hands; a man's strength might break down,—a mortal fear might come upon the mortal spirit; but the Lord God behind and with the man whom He had chosen—the Infinite Power and the Unfailing Will—should go forth and do his own work among the people of the earth. Moses really put nothing into the hands of Joshua; he burdened him with no awful, lonely responsibility; he only put Joshua himself into the hands of God.

And then came the great outburst of his own human longing and entreaty. After all, might he not even enter in to *behold* the "good land beyond the Jordan"? Just once to see it in its fair outstretch, its grand heights and beautiful valleys? "I besought the Lord at that time," he says, "saying, I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land, the goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord would not hear me: He said unto me,

Let it suffice thee; speak no more to me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward; and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan."

As a man speaking with a man, Moses heard the Lord's word in his spirit. Does it matter whether there was an audible sound in the air about his ears, or not? We are not reading an altogether literal story of physical signs; the phrases of a physical condition and understanding are of necessity used; but what we are learning is the high, wonderful, near experience of a great, believing human soul with its God. And Moses was so close with his Maker, his whole thought and being were so given into Divine control, that not only was he absolutely sure of what God said to him, but absolutely in acquiescence with the true and holy judgment made known to him. The "Let it suffice thee" was the "Peace be still," to all selfish perturbation. There the whole "matter" between Moses and Jehovah was laid down. It was like the "Woman, what have I to do with thee," that the Christ spoke even to his mother. It was no harsh,

repulsing refusal, but a calm, supreme bidding into a still and perfect trust.

"Charge Joshua, and encourage him," the voice went on to say. "Strengthen *him*; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see."

When a man's life is altogether possessed and informed by the Heavenly Will, his own will cannot be a pain and cross against it; he goes over, whole-souled, into the Divine purpose, and is at one with the Right and the Best. As soon as he knows definitely what must be, he no longer desires, with vehemence and struggle, any other. Moses was not only in the hands, but in the Heart, of God. He yielded himself, and rested there, content. His life was "hid," and safe, like the life of the Only Begotten. If he might not cross "*this* Jordan," he should yet be lifted over some mightier, more mysterious River, into some yet grander, appointed place.

"So we abode," he says quietly, "in the valley over against Beth-Peor."

CHAPTER V

THE RIGHTEOUS COMMONWEALTH

PATIENTLY, exactly, in every full and minute particular, Moses now rehearsed to the waiting host the laws and ordinances that God had given him for the people, by which they should live in His grace and favor, which are the harmonies of human obedience and the Divine wisdom.

"This ye shall do," — This ye shall not do," — he commanded them, all the way through the possible crises of circumstance, both large and small. Was ever a law-giving, was ever a framing of national constitution, like this marvelous ordaining in comprehensiveness and detail?

With all that was temporary, with all that concerned only a rough half-civilization, — that recognized extremest brutal possibility, and denounced such sin as we shudder even to hear denounced, — where has there ever been a legislation that went so straight to the cen-

tral right in all things, and declared such an enforcement of every rule of justice, purity, and truth, for justice, purity, and truth's own sake? for the sake of the knowledge of the One Holy, Just, and True? "That thou," says Moses to the Hebrew commonwealth, "mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, *The Lord Thy God.*"

Is it possible in the face of this sublime word and authority — before this pattern of a government announced and accredited from the Highest — to fail of the conviction and confession that so, finally, after men have tried all their poor, halfway hedgings and penalties, their petty policies and expediences for material interests, and have found that the larger the expansions and complications of such national life and so-called order, the more miserable and the more hopeless are the partialities and the confusions, — we *must* return to the simplicities of the Law of God, to the enactment of ordinances in his Name only, and to the "Thus saith the Lord" as the first and final argument in all doing and relation between man and man, between peoples and their organized controls, and between group and group of the separate powers and publics of the earth?

Until somewhere in time and place and history shall arise a Moses who shall lead a yet larger, nobler Exodus out of our own false traditions, our Egyptian corruptions and sensual wisdoms, into a desert of purifying, and through it to a new commonwealth of Israel, must we not look back to the Moses who believed in God in the face of the Pharaohs, and in a remote age and an unready generation so antetyped the Christ himself as to prepare for Him an expectant nation ; and, looking back, must we not own that what he saw and believed could have been none other than the vision and the truth which the Father giveth to the Son, — which cometh only from the Fatherhood through the Sonhood, and which hath spoken continually to the world through all the prophets ? Must not this old Insight and Belief of Moses be our hope and assurance that forever in the world is something which through the dark urges on into the light, and in the fullness of time shall be another Divine Coming in the Flesh, and a Reign in the earthly that shall lift it up into the heavenly ?

The ceremonial law is very particular and extended ; manifold and exact ; it takes much

wording, much length of rehearsing and recording. It became, as all formality and detail must become, so much the life of the Jewish people, so much their rallying point and foundation of faith and polity, that its externality has been the obvious thing in their history; that which other peoples, looking on and reading the record, have come, like the Israelites themselves, to regard as the chief thing in their nationality; its faith, its bond, its witness of their especial claim; the matter to be discussed and judged, as to its absolute truth or error, its perfect, inclusive wisdom or its partial, faulty, time-answering expediency; whether indeed it were of any divine origin at all, or only a clever human statecraft; so to decide definitely, one way or the other, the verdict of after ages, whether these men of the twelve tribes were actually the chosen of Jehovah, to hold and show forth his truth in the world, or only one of the old, early, half-blind races of the earth, groping their own sense-hindered way toward the far-off, universal light that is yet to come. The belief of the world has been hampered by this criticism of form, instead of going straight to the great, essential conception itself, which was

then already living in men's souls, and which gave to even harsh and cumbersome ritual and observance a quickening vitality. Even in the mere story, that which is all along centrally important, and so given by the word of Moses, has been overlooked, or not even reached, through this stopping to find fault with, or to try to justify, the temporary outworks that protected it.

All through the Book of Deuteronomy, or Recapitulation, if we pause to note, we find this first, interior reality behind all law insisted on. The grandest sayings are the simplest and the briefest. That upon which Moses built his wonderful order and economy is the selfsame upon which Christ declared to Peter that He was building his church, — the inmost revelation and close-coming of God, by his truth and his righteousness, to the spirits of his children.

“What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? *For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them*, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?”

“Hearken unto the statutes and the judg-

ments : keep them and do them : keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart."

"Your eyes have seen what *the Lord did*. Ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day."

"That day that thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb, the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear *Me* all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."

"And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them."

The doing of the statutes, the learning of the judgments, were to be the keeping near and alive to God. Statutes and judgments are not ceremonies and sacrifices ; these were but expressions and reminders ; statutes and judgments are righteousness and truth, — the goodness and the knowledge of the life with God. This was what Moses believed in. Form was only an outgrowth. Outgrowth changes. The seed principle remains the same.

“Take heed to yourselves,” he says, warning them against excess and literalism in form; “ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire. Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God which he made with you, and make you a graven image, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. . . . When ye shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any *thing*, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, — I call heaven and earth to witness that ye shall soon utterly perish, . . . and the Lord shall scatter you, and ye shall be left, few in number, among the heathen, and there ye shall serve gods, the work of men’s hands,” — the *things* men love and worship, — “which neither see nor hear,” — nor have any soul of life in them.

“But if, *from thence*,” (even,) “thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days ” (the eleventh hour days), “if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt

be obedient unto his voice, he will not forsake thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. — For ask now of the days that are past, . . . did ever people hear the *voice of God* speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live ? ”

Fire and terror men had seen, and felt ; awful power had come upon them, had made them afraid, and they had perished ; but Israel had *heard God* out of the midst of the awfulness, as by a word out of a human heart ; and they had lived. “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that it was the *Lord*,” — this manifested, speaking, near-coming Commander and Friend, — “he is God : there is none else beside him. Out of heaven,” — out of the ineffable, the unapproachable, — “he made thee ” (in the spirit) “to hear his voice, *that he might instruct thee ; and upon earth*,” — in the elemental sign, — “he showed thee his great fire ; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. . . . Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God, in the heaven above and upon the earth beneath ; there is none else. Therefore keep

his statutes and commandments, that it may go well with thee." . . .

"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb ; . . . not with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with *you*," — with this very present generation of you, who have been born and grown to your manhood since that day ; for what the Lord speaks once, He speaks forever, — can we not hear the word of Moses, thus declaring, sounding down to "us, even us," of this late, doubting, questioning time ?

"The Lord talked with *you*, face to face, in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt," — the old earth and time of darkness and ignorance of me, — "from the house of bondage," — to material things only ; and "*Thou shalt have none other gods before me.*"

"Who can think that the belief of Moses, and the word of God from Sinai, are not truth and message to this day ? Surely it is not less of us than of those people waiting and listening under that burning mountain long ago, that the Lord says unto his prophets, striv-

ing with the unbelief of the ages, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments, *always*, that it might be well with them, and with their children, forever!"

Surely it is no less than the whole spiritual commonwealth of human kind that is concerned to heed that last "Hear, O Israel," after the second solemn enunciation of the Ten Sayings by the borders of the Jordan:—

"The Lord our God is one Lord:

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.— And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then shalt thou say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.— And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the

Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. And it shall be our righteousness" (our rightness before God ; and our well-being with all things) "if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea." It is beyond *no* sea, of time, or separation, or change, or decays of governments or faiths, or nations. "But the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, thou that mayest do it." "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Was that not the promulgation of the Kingdom? Is not Israel yet encamped upon the Jordan, just outside the Country of her Promise? Has not God been leading her, down the years, through the wilderness, through the

strifes, into the very sight and nearness of what may be, whenever our willingness shall meet his own good purpose? Has not the same word been uttered all along: "If ye will enter into life," — as men or as a people, — "keep the commandments"? Is not the same promise written for the believers of the New Testament that was given to them of the Old? That there should be made of them, through faith in God, and life by his word, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called" them "out of darkness into his marvellous light?"

"Blessed are they that do his commandments; that they may have right to the tree of life," — "whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," — "and may enter in *through the gates* into the city."

"That great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God," from the "new heavens" into the "new earth," when all shall be accomplished; when "the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be

their God." When *He that is upon the throne* shall say, "Behold, I make all things new." And when they that have overcome, in the name and strength of their God, shall inherit all things.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENTERING IN

THE Faith of Moses had been fully unfolded to his people. Whether he felt, distinctly, its everlasting reach or not, we find and feel in it the vital truth of the life of the world, and the sublime prophecy of which the great Entering In of all tribes and kindreds and nations to one perfect Home and Commonwealth is at last to be the mighty and holy fulfillment.

But did the Leader of Israel die without some sight of the final heavenly consummation, any more than without that of the nearing earthly accomplishment?

When he had spoken all these last words, and had sung his great song, and gone up into the top of Pisgah, was not his vision more than of the little land of Canaan between the Jordan and the sea? Was it not rather like that of John, when the Spirit carried him away to a "great and high mountain," and showed him the city that had the "glory of God;" with

its wall of twelve foundations, of burning precious stones, and its twelve gates, "every several gate of one pearl," one immaculate purity, by which alone the tribes should enter? Was not the feeling of what God had prepared for his own people, when He should have made all people his own, that which touched him, if only half aware, as he looked forth from the south unto the north, and away to the shining, wave-bound west, and heard the Voice, saying, "This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob"?

It was not long, at least, before he knew. "Thou shalt not cross over *this* Jordan," was soon to reveal itself to him as an infinite promise, — beyond all ever given to the patriarchs, — veiled behind a brief and small denial.

We know of him once more in such fashion as signifies, with the grand simplicity of all spiritual assertion, whither he had "entered in" from that lonely peak of Nebo, where men said "the servant of the Lord" had "died," "according to the word of the Lord."

We are told of him as standing upon another mountain afterward, within the precincts of this same typical Holy Land, with the shining of the Eternal Light in his form and gar-

ments, when his Lord, in a vision, assumed for a little space the glory he had always with the Father, and when from out the unseen, his two prophets who had passed alike mysteriously from the earthly, as without the mortal change, into the near heavenly, with similar close and swift transition came beside Him to hold wonderful converse ; to part, even to his disciples' sight, the veil that keeps men blind, and permit the effulgence of the inner, vital sphere to break forth and flash upon them its supreme disclosures.

Are they not like grand stepping-stones, from point to point of our long crossing toward the eternal hope, — these mountain summits of vision, lifting themselves at their serene, waiting distances, to give, each successive one, a nearer and yet nearer glimpse and approach for our apprehension and realizing ? Horeb, — Pisgah, — that sacred “ mountain apart ” of the Transfiguration, near Cæsarea Philippi, — the hill in Galilee of the resurrection meeting, — Olivet, of the palms and hosannas, and of the Ascension, — the “ great and high mountain ” of the Apocalyptic premonstration, — they are the heights in time upon which the glory of the eternities has struck with its illumination.

Moses believed in the Kingdom of God upon the earth ; in the direct ruling of the Supreme in every heart and life, and in all the affairs of men ; that there could be no community nor nationality except such as should be formed by such ruling, and through the living, inspiring Wisdom ; no government but by the immediate, practical, particular Will of God. He believed beforehand in the Lord's Prayer.

What else did the Son of God himself declare, — but that this Kingdom of Heaven was real, integral, at hand ? What else was the Gospel of a new birth and life for individual souls and for the race ?

What else was the vision of the Apocalypse, — that last showing from the mountain top of spiritual insight and prophecy, — but the scene of the "gathering in of all things in Christ," — in a sonhood of all humanity to God the Father ; a dwelling in the one re-joined and manifested sphere, the many mansions and the holy City of the peoples redeemed unto God out of all the earth, and abiding in his Light, having no need of the sun or any lesser dispensation, no need of any control but the guidance of God's look and word, of any

leadership or organization but of Divine Will and its sweet, sure, heavenly forces; where there shall be no more pain in human hearts nor contradiction in human lives nor clashing nor discord nor war any more among men, but the leaves of the tree of life, — every fresh forth-putting of an infinite growth and progress, — shall be for healing and for peace, and “God himself shall wipe away all tears from off all faces”? Where the glory and honor of the kings and the nations of the earth shall be brought in before the One King and to the joy of the One Nation, and nothing shall enter that defileth or maketh a lie, but only they who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life?

Toward this, in the first dispensation, Moses lived, and thought, and prayed, and wrought. He brought his people, by the power that was given into his soul and act from God, to the beginning of such a life — representatively — in a new land. He established a theocracy; the only government that ever immediately acknowledged and referred to God as its authority upon the earth; and such vitality from above was in the institution, that broken up as its form and centrality have been, a son of

Judah is a Jew to-day, a Hebrew is a child of Israel, and Jerusalem and the return of the believing people to their God and to his reign over them in his Holy Place are the living hope and expectation that yet survive, to make at least perpetual sign of that which shall be, and which they who confess to the Word already made flesh among us, acknowledge and rejoice in, — amidst all the hindrances and haltings and confusions of a yet but half redeemed condition, — as a thing begun, a glory surely to be perfected, an utterance gone forth from Him who hath spoken nothing that shall return unto Him void.

Was it not a fit time for Moses to enter in — not to the little place and continued authority there which to men might seem his earning and reward, — but to the central grand Reality from which all his inspiration had been drawn, — to those “things in the heavens” of which the “pattern” had been “shown him in the mount,” and symbolized by him for the sons of Israel?

“He was not; for God took him.” He never came down among the people from that peak of Nebo. The mortal of him “died there,

and the Lord buried him." What was that death and burial? How shall we dare to say? We may at least feel that it was something as grand, as significant, as his life had been.

Moses, — Enoch, — Elijah, — and the Son of God who was also the Son of Man; these, according to the record, passed away from earth leaving no earthly behind them; no body to decay, no vestige as of a destruction. What does such a record mean? For the *record* is there; it has been conceived of and believed, to claim the least for it; it is an idea, a thought, a vital thing. What shall we do with it?

Saint Peter, on the day of Pentecost, made glorious answer, declaring the resurrection:—

"Whom" (Jesus of Nazareth) "God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; *because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*"

There is a law of life over death; a law by which that which is temporal gives place, in a quiet, natural order, to that which is eternal. That which is transmutes into the thing that shall be; that which has been all alive with

God hath in it no element of the perishing. The body is more than the garment; death is swallowed up in life. "Thou hast made known unto me the ways of life," says David, and Peter quotes him: "My flesh also shall rest in hope, because . . . thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."

Gently, swiftly, the spirit may detach itself from the flesh; so *much* may be spirit that the flesh may fall to invisible particles of its original matter, — who can tell? We know the gradual, loathsome process that has to be hidden away out of our sight. God knows other processes. Men may have all been meant to die by a translation; here and there it has been possible, perhaps, to show the beautiful palingenesis. Saint Paul touches the possibility in his wonderful theory of the resurrection. "We shall not all sleep; we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." Need this be interpreted as a double resurrection, at a literal trumpet sound, at a fixed and general Last Day? Have we not possibly mistaken the sublime reach of its meaning? What *was* dead shall disappear — shall be dissipated,

dissolved into new life ; the spiritual, the incorruptible, shall be raised up, and instantly. Is there any wrenching in such a reading?

“ No man knoweth of his sepulchre.”

We must leave it there. Augustly, solemnly, as he had lived, communed with Deity, and given messages to men, the man Moses departed from the earth, and was lifted up. The heavens closed about him, and the earth showed no grave.

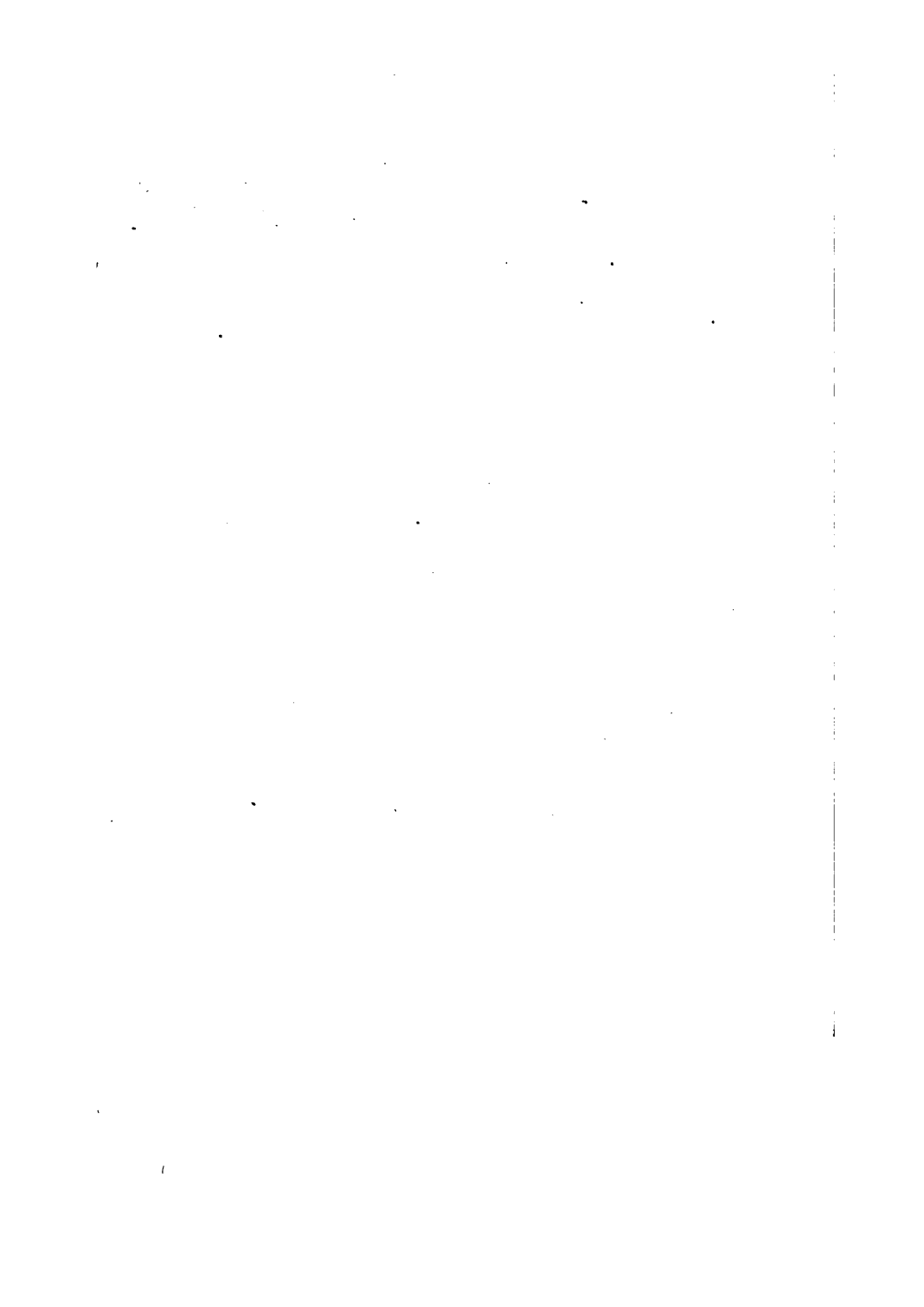
Even so was the Son of Man lifted up.

And He shall draw all men unto Him.

CLOSING NOTE

IF in the foregoing pages, which represent successive studies, made at somewhat varying intervals, of the intrinsic meaning of the Transactions of the Pentateuch, there seem possibly some superfluous repetition of suggested thought, let it be remembered that Holy Scripture itself inevitably and constantly reiterates. It is all a Deuteronomy. In the final analysis there are but a few essential verities that can even appear to stand separately. At the heart of all is the absolute Unity which we seek by any research into Truth. There are but two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets; and these two are like, the one to the other. The deeper we investigate, the more nearly single we find all cause and law. The Bible teaches with "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little," of the same great things, presented and re-presented in all utterance and experience. That the Bible does this, as our life

does it, is unmistakable proof that like life itself it is of the everlasting Word and Work of God. Receiving over and over, in manifold repeated ways, the selfsame grand and beautiful perceptions, — arriving over and over again at the same central points by different converging approaches, — we recognize, as we could no otherwise, the interior facts of being to which all human history and cognition give evidence and refer. In the witnessing of two or three, or many demonstrations, is each testimony emphasized and the whole revelation rounded and established.



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